



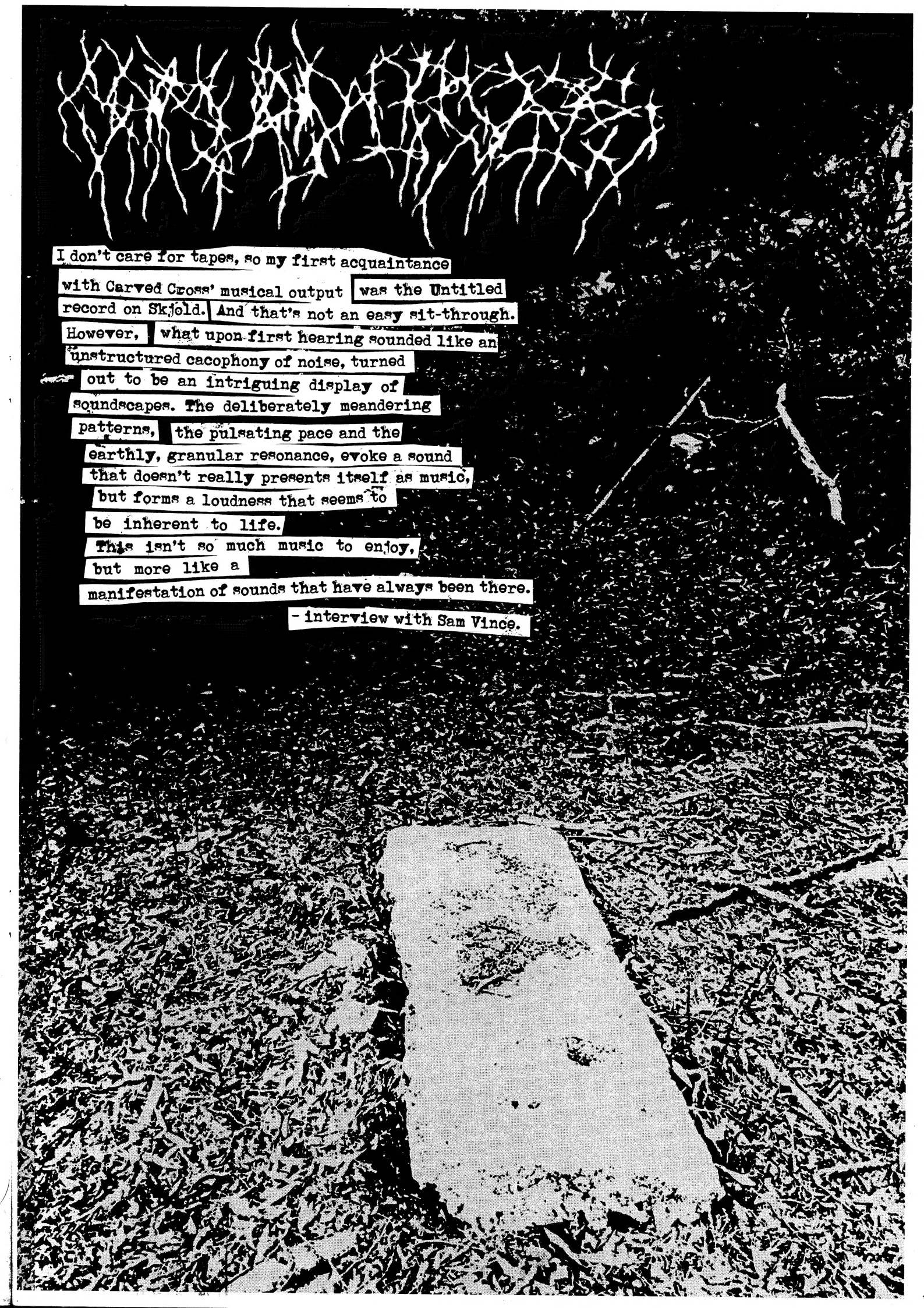
BOOTHAEVEN'S issue one, 2017. Black metal, Hardcore punk fanzine including interviews with Turia, Mark McCoy (Youth Attack!, Charles Bronson...), Void Prayer, GG King, Carved Cross and the Ordo Omegae Absolutae collective.

All the animals come out at night - whores, skunk pussies, buggers, queens, fairies,
dopers, junkies, sick, venal. Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets.



Thanks to everyone involved and thank you for your interest. There's more to follow. Get in touch.

The making of playlist: Forbidden Citadel of Spirits' Collection I and II, Booji Boys' debut LP,
Keiji Haino's Watashi Dake?, Niantiel's Cavern of the Skeletal Spirits, Lluvia's Enigma, Reiziger's
Our Kodo, Propast's Vestnik Preispodnji, Thangorodrim's Taur-Nu-
YouTube suggested to me. Ruin and those Amelie Lens sets



I don't care for tapes, so my first acquaintance
with Carved Cross' musical output was the Untitled
record on Skjold. And that's not an easy sit-through.
However, what upon first hearing sounded like an
unstructured cacophony of noise, turned
out to be an intriguing display of
soundscapes. The deliberately meandering
patterns, the pulsating pace and the
earthly, granular resonance, evoke a sound
that doesn't really presents itself as music,
but forms a loudness that seems to
be inherent to life.
This isn't so much music to enjoy,
but more like a
manifestation of sounds that have always been there.

- interview with Sam Vince.

It's not rare for a black metal band to be influenced by natural elements: the cold grimness of the Scandinavian bands is of course the most evident example. Tasmania is known for its natural parks and reserves; does this reflect in the music of Carved Cross?

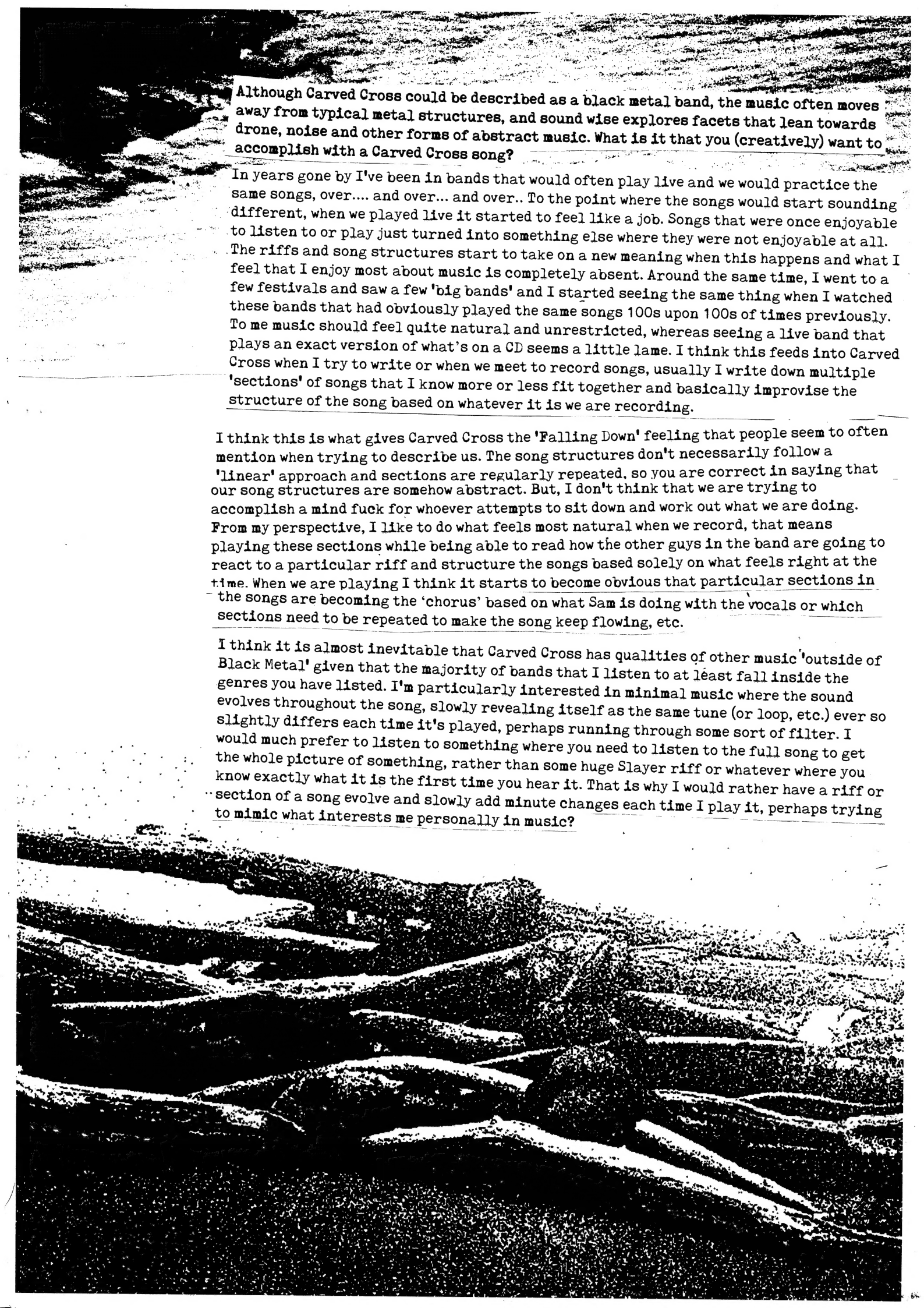
It's a tough one, growing up my father always used to go bush, this meant gathering wood so the fireplace we had in the living room stayed alight all winter as well as shooting all sorts of wildlife, for food and game. I distinctly remember walking into the garage at maybe 6 years old, and seeing a flayed deer bleeding out onto a tarpaulin on the cold concrete floor, the red and pink was so vivid and terrifying, he has 3 deer heads mounted proudly on his living room wall now. I loathed going on these trips, camping in the freezing air with the scratchy grass and rock filled ground underneath you, no showers, no conveniences, no friends. I was dragged along up until the age when I could finally refuse, at which point I abruptly stopped. It wasn't until my 30's that I started to discover a personal wonder for the outdoors. I moved very close to the Mount Wellington Reserve and I started walking my dog along the paths and trails found underneath this mountain that overshadows our whole city most weekends. Then and only then did I start to see the beauty

in nature. They say the desire to reconnect with nature is buried in us all, and I genuinely felt that this was the case at this time. It was as I was somehow reawakening some deep Tasmanian Volk instead of just having new experiences and getting some well needed exercise. Now I see it as something far different, nature and the elements are fascinating because no matter how far you go and how much you know, you will never see or experience it all. It is so big and just so fucking real, it really does blow your mind when you stop and stare across a gully or out into the endless sea of trees, it puts things back into perspective. I leave my phone at home and I don't listen to music out there anymore, it is just me and the dog. I feel a bit ripped off when I walk past another person actually; it ruins the solemn fantasy that I am the only one experiencing it. I hope to inherit those deer heads one day.

I think due to our surroundings and our activities in the bush underneath the mountain it must reflect in the music of Carved Cross somehow, even if it doesn't come through lyrically. Obviously it has occupied a lot of the artwork, and all these images have been taken by either one of the core members of the band. To say Carved Cross is exclusively influenced by nature wouldn't be true, it is an integral part of the project due to being an integral part of the people involved, but I think it is only one part amongst many.

Is it more difficult to 'get into' traditional Scandinavian bands as Immortal or Darkthrone, when the temperature in your country generally speaking doesn't drop under the freezing point? Do you think black metal is experienced differently?

The appeal of "traditional" BM bands is that of attempting to understand the unfathomable. That is what keeps me pushing forward and discovering (or rediscovering) records by Darkthrone, Burzum, Emperor, Immortal etc. years after I first heard them. I don't necessarily associate them with a climate point and at what temperature the snow falls, but more about the sheer negativity and devotion to something so pure and hateful. If you talk to either member of Carved Cross the way we experience BM is completely different, and it is ever evolving too, I can't talk for MN, but for me it is about the approach and the execution almost exclusively, I want their approach to be clear and concise and the execution to be deadly. This means rawness plays an equal part as pure majestic soaring passages; it is all about the underlying intent.



Although Carved Cross could be described as a black metal band, the music often moves away from typical metal structures, and sound wise explores facets that lean towards drone, noise and other forms of abstract music. What is it that you (creatively) want to accomplish with a Carved Cross song?

In years gone by I've been in bands that would often play live and we would practice the same songs, over.... and over... and over.. To the point where the songs would start sounding different, when we played live it started to feel like a job. Songs that were once enjoyable to listen to or play just turned into something else where they were not enjoyable at all. The riffs and song structures start to take on a new meaning when this happens and what I feel that I enjoy most about music is completely absent. Around the same time, I went to a few festivals and saw a few 'big bands' and I started seeing the same thing when I watched these bands that had obviously played the same songs 100s upon 100s of times previously. To me music should feel quite natural and unrestricted, whereas seeing a live band that plays an exact version of what's on a CD seems a little lame. I think this feeds into Carved Cross when I try to write or when we meet to record songs, usually I write down multiple 'sections' of songs that I know more or less fit together and basically improvise the structure of the song based on whatever it is we are recording.

I think this is what gives Carved Cross the 'Falling Down' feeling that people seem to often mention when trying to describe us. The song structures don't necessarily follow a 'linear' approach and sections are regularly repeated, so you are correct in saying that our song structures are somehow abstract. But, I don't think that we are trying to accomplish a mind fuck for whoever attempts to sit down and work out what we are doing. From my perspective, I like to do what feels most natural when we record, that means playing these sections while being able to read how the other guys in the band are going to react to a particular riff and structure the songs based solely on what feels right at the time. When we are playing I think it starts to become obvious that particular sections in the songs are becoming the 'chorus' based on what Sam is doing with the vocals or which sections need to be repeated to make the song keep flowing, etc.

I think it is almost inevitable that Carved Cross has qualities of other music 'outside of Black Metal' given that the majority of bands that I listen to at least fall inside the genres you have listed. I'm particularly interested in minimal music where the sound evolves throughout the song, slowly revealing itself as the same tune (or loop, etc.) ever so slightly differs each time it's played, perhaps running through some sort of filter. I would much prefer to listen to something where you need to listen to the full song to get the whole picture of something, rather than some huge Slayer riff or whatever where you know exactly what it is the first time you hear it. That is why I would rather have a riff or section of a song evolve and slowly add minute changes each time I play it, perhaps trying to mimic what interests me personally in music?

When the music reaches that level of lo-fi abstraction, what are the band's criteria to consider a song worthy of being a full-fledged song (is there, so to speak, a standard to live up to)?

There is no particular criteria that we apply to a song to see if it is worthy. I think the most important part in a song (or a release) coming together is in the much earlier stages of having that initial idea of what exactly it is that we are working towards. I can clearly remember when I had the idea of working towards 'Untitled'... I was watching some local 'Black Metal Bands' at a gig and it was obvious that the appeal between the band and the 'crowd' was in the song titles (i.e. "This next one is called Anti-Christ, Blood, Semen, etc.), imagery (Corpse Paint, Spikes, Fake Blood) and the generic 'tough guy' metalhead/meathead persona. The bands could have played a blast beat and strummed the same note on the guitar for an hour and everyone would have gotten the exact same thing out of the night. So, my idea was for Carved Cross to have a release which had none of those things present - no Corpse Paint photos, no titles of any kind (song titles or even a title for the release). From there it was quite easy to sprawl a few hastily written riff/song ideas on a scrap of paper over the course of an evening and then meet to record once we had worked out the format we wanted the release to be.

There probably is a criteria when it comes to 'production' in a sense, but we're not anal about it. Most of our recordings are done with an old tape player sitting in the middle of our rehearsal space, so if we record something and the sound levels are fucked, maybe we would put the tape recorder in a different spot and try again (depending on what the recording is being used for). For instance, if you listen to the last song on 'Demo II', you can't really hear the vocals or the drums and that works fine on that release, but if that recording was going to be on an LP we probably would have tried to re-record it.

We have never recorded a song and then said that it doesn't sound good enough to be used for a release. I wouldn't bother playing the song in the first place if it wasn't something that sounded like it belonged on our releases... Our formula is pretty simple and we have no reason to try anything outside of what we have done up to this point.

You rereleased an album on vinyl via Skjold. Why did you choose to rerelease these particular tapes out of your rather extensive discography? As all Skjold releases until now the record sold out almost immediately, and left some people frustrated about the fact that they have to pass on it or spend more via Discogs (etc.). Can you understand that sort of critique?

The choice was essentially up to Lasse, I see Skjold as a sort of archaeological label, it primarily unearths previously released material and gives it a wider reach via the vinyl format. We offered Skjold a new LP or to re-issue a past release. He chose the latter.

To be honest, I initially struggled accepting the fact that we needed something to be re-issued. I am a firm believer in moving forward and not looking back, I didn't see the usefulness in revisiting past work while we were still actively creating new material. I think there is far too much of this going on in underground music, countless re-issues of small print releases, it seems a bit mindless and mirrors the ever growing monster of empty consumerism. It seems like the same people who own the tape end up buying the re-issue LP version anyway, so that is why I questioned the need for any of our stuff to be re-issued. What won me over was Lasse and his enthusiasm for crude raw BM and his desire to participate and add something of substance. I felt honored that he considered the Untitled tape set worthy of re-release.

In retrospect now, I feel pretty much as I did originally, especially after the fact that it sold out so quickly and ended up being sold on the secondary market for such high prices. Any sort of reissue should act as a vehicle to reach more people and unfortunately I don't think this happened here. People are buying up these releases in the hope they can make money from people who legitimately want to hear the music and that's pretty fucking scummy. Anyone who for one second thinks there is money to be made in raw, crude BM is badly mistaken. People can critique whatever they want, I think we had the idea that this re-issue would be a good thing, and so did Lasse, unfortunately the leech mentality of underground music has produced this type of buyer, we are all to blame for this, anyone who posts wantlists or lusts after records has created this pathetic market and now we all have to deal with it.

I must admit I was really surprised that the records sold out that easily, after all, it sounds really, really underground. Maybe the limitation somehow made it more desirable. If that's the case; it somehow implies that underground music culture, while being all critical for consumerist society, simply embraces that same form of consumerism...

Underground music is consumerist society. As much as we try and distance ourselves from those who we deem as weak and pathetic for buying into fashion trends and mindless hype, we ourselves are no better. We are hypocrites who scramble after limited demos from bands we will never hear from again or die hard editions that will get filed away on your shelf for years, all that matters is that you feel safe in the knowledge that you got one. I feel shitty for taking part in it to the degree we have, but at all times when we have been responsible for the pressing sizes I think we strived to meet what we saw as the demand. No one wants to sit on 500 copies of a record for years, it's simply unaffordable, but at the same time it is a false market where someone presses 25 tapes full well knowing that you have 100 people who want it. That is a bit deceiving I think and not in the true spirit of the underground.

Carved Cross seems to appeal to a HC as well as a black metal audience; what isn't that self-evident: to some these genres are mutually irreconcilable. I assume you don't agree with this, since Down & Out magazine shows a beautiful, solid blend of hardcore and black metal. What appeals to you in HC that is somehow lacking in BM and vice versa (or to what extent can these genres be supplementary)?

I am first and foremost an underground music fan. Hardcore seems to be the one style that taints you forever once you participate in it. It doesn't matter if you started out listening to Morbid Angel and Carcass, the minute you entertain the notions found in Hardcore it will never leave you, even if you want it to, people will not let you forget your past. I have acknowledged this fact and grown to revel in it. There is no point in trying to be something you are not, and Down and Out is a reflection of who I am for better and for worse.

In some ways, Hardcore and Black Metal seem more irreconcilable right now than they did when I first started trying to incorporate the two together in a zine. The time is coming where you need to pick a side in the underground (and society in general), you either side with those who want equality for everyone and will shout whatever slogans are required while undermining anyone who doesn't agree with their point of view, or you will side with those who want destruction, nihilism and negativity. The choice should be pretty clear where Dpwn & Out stands.

The same thing appeals to me in Hardcore, Black Metal, Powerelectronics, Death Metal etc., it is an attitude and approach. There needs to be a sense of desperation and a feel of authenticity that the artist will back up what they have stood for. I am not interested in "by the numbers" stock standard and boring music or records from any genre. To me it is all part of a larger picture and one I no longer feel a need to differentiate between. I am intrigued by those who incorporate a myriad of influences yet still manage to produce something original and authentic. Don't try and reinvent the fucking wheel here; but don't simply copy it either.

If I read the interviews in your magazine, Down & Out, I get the feeling you are rather critical about today's underground heavy music scenes. What motivates you to continue with the zine anyway, and by doing so creating a platform for these scene?

Every time I do another issue of the zine I feel as if I have succumbed to an addiction that I almost kicked. Every issue is "the last one" in my mind, yet after a few months my brain starts to tick over and I start to hear some new bands that interest me and before I can even stop myself I have begun the process of doing another issue again. It is essentially a compulsion, I know people don't need this, this isn't part of any scene, if it didn't exist no one would miss it, I simply feel an urge to do it, to create, to reach out to bands and ask them questions about why they did what they did. I am just a creepy old fucker and without a zine no one would answer my questions or reply to my email about buying their demo.





Belgian black metal doesn't really impress me; and that's an euphemistic way of putting it... Frankly, I can only remember playing an Iconoclasm album every now and then... but that was still in the Discman-era. Hence the astonishment when Portugal's infamous Altare Production released a comp showcasing the output of a young, Flemish black metal circle: Ordo Omegae Absolutae. My curiosity was piqued...

- Interview with the Ordo Omegae Absolutae collective



Ω · Ω · Α

If I'm not mistaken, there are currently five bands active under the banner of Ordo Omegae Absolutae (Odibilis Signatus, Morkenatten, De Vermis Mysteriis, Necrosophia and Sepulchrum), and these bands consist of the same musicians. I therefore assume you define a rather strict 'framework' for each band in order to keep things separated. Is this 'initial set up' for each band mostly based upon a sound you want to pursue, or rather a feeling, a philosophy...

To us, the OOA mainly is an entity consisting of separate projects that make part of the larger aural embodiment we try to reflect. There are of course some guidelines that we use to define the different projects in order to not make them overlap. This, to a certain extent is necessary in order to give each name its own identity. For example: even though Morkenatten and Odibilis Signatus both are based upon a 90ies 2nd wave style black metal, infused with influences of the Finnish scene (rather melodic minor chord progressions), they differ in theme and therefore riffs and composition: otherwise one could say they'd be one and the same. OS is direct and straightforward in its execution and riffs (even somewhat punky) corresponding with its nihilistic message, whereas Morkenatten needs to explore different (meandering) paths of the musical crossroads to deliver what it has to say. However these frameworks aren't as rigid as they might seem - we leave room for experiment as the overall 'feel' and atmosphere to a composition still is dominant above all. Music, and by extension all art is something to be felt individually. All of our projects are constantly evolving as we're growing as musicians: a natural process. The coming-into-existence of each project until now grew from a combination of influential reading combined with improvisation of music that was heart-felt and evolving into a specific sound: a healthy combination of both impulsiveness and thought. We believe this is the way it should be: no prefab jump-on-the-bandwagon bullshit.

Doesn't this method stand in the way of a natural progression of the bands in the long run? After all, going in a certain direction could implicate that you start to lean towards another OOA project...

It seems this question keeps on returning. To us each individual project is part of a 'palace' we're building: it is not coincidental that the front cover of "Compendium Ordinis" shows a fortress. The listeners can open the gates and see for themselves which corners they feel attracted to the most.

What you mention, that we might find an infinite well of potential projects because of somewhat 'confining' our inspiration under different projects, might indeed be true though. Most of these are however aspects of existing projects, which means they can almost perfectly be incorporated in the 5-way structure we work with right now. Some projects contain opportunities to evolve towards a certain sound or experiment. We don't however rule out the possibility of starting new projects, but ONLY if they are inherently different from what we have at the moment AND still fit the overall view we carved out for the OOA.

Until now the Ordo Omegae Absolutae conceals behind a veil of underground mysticism. I have the feeling this isn't merely a matter of being young bands, but rather a conscious choice... Do you think that black metal, in general, would benefit from bands embracing that underground status a bit more (instead of rapidly 'making a name' within black metal mids)?

If you take the entire context of black metal literally, then yes, but is this actually the case today? When looking at many bands, we believe the mindset isn't still of much importance nowadays... This might be mere speculation, but the autistic mindset of giving every form of art a label is disappearing, however slowly. We have our ways to do things, what the rest of the so-called scene does is their problem. We don't strive for a following: we started the OOA and the beliefs behind it as a collective vision.

That being said, the overall way how black metal is perceived and made nowadays is an evolution that is almost inherent with the entertainment business and - in extent - promotion through social media. Rapid individual satisfaction, quick-wins and the combo of money and endorphin aren't what it's about (or at least SHOULDN'T be). Online media however shouldn't be entirely abandoned as a medium (as we have experimented with it as well), but used in a thought-through extent: not for shallow attention-whoring 'm'as-tu vu' or to pose as an 'original gangsta' to score cult points with easily impressed youngsters. Black metal is an art form and when it comes down to a mere business model to quench narcissistic needs, then fuck that. Our underground presence instead of rapid profiling is both a choice as an inherent result of our way of thinking.


A somewhat perverse side effect of underground authenticity within today's online culture, is the propagation of shallow consumerism. This easily leads to paradoxical situations: for example labels that sell one record per person, are, by doing so, making records desirable as collector-items. What's your opinion on this matter, and how is OOA going to deal with this situation?

You seem to mention the 'discogs-mentality': the epitome of music as a stock market, where one speculates on which band will make the most money in a few years, something that is most likely here to stay though: it is a side-effect of every (underground) art-form. As a matter of fact, we made a rather tongue-in-cheek reference to this evolution by taking really raw versions of some songs and putting them onto floppy disks limited to 20 copies. Limitation is however part of black metal: releasing music is, when done PROPERLY -not out of greed- a zero profit operation, and printing on physical format means a serious investment: 500 copies of a demo is already extremely ambitious for most starting bands and labels (if not financial suicide). As for ourselves, we consider represses of releases we deem worthy of reprinting. "Compendium Ordinis", our demo-compilation is a raw blueprint of what we are and with promises to what the future holds - to leave it at 100 copies would be disrespectful to the mission behind it! Other releases might however be left at their limitation point as they serve no further purpose or meaning to us anymore. Also, something worth thinking about: isn't that sought for with ardor not the most rewarding in the ways of self-enlightenment? That which presents itself on a silver platter is less invigorating than that achieved through profound searching and thought.

The collective's interest in Latin is noteworthy, but of course it's not that exceptional neither: Latin language founds its way into black metal in an early stage. In fact, that always amazed me: after all Latin was (is) the language of the catholic church, thus for anti-religious bands it would make more sense to embrace ancient vulgar languages. Latin is also the language of science in the modern age; yet I always thought of black metal being less about clear, mathematical correctness, but more of an abstract understanding of being on a visceral level. A more 'Middel nederlandse' (Medieval Dutch) approach à la Hadewijch (13th century Dutch mystica) was never an option?


The funny thing is that we might consider Dutch, possibly indeed in the medieval fashion, for some release in the future. We're however not going to give away much since these ideas are only starting to mature. Like a good wine ideas time to ripen and age to give the most opportune results.

Why Latin you ask? The medieval universal language of the scholars bears quite a mystical feel and a scent of mystery. Also it seemed like most bands from Belgium either adopted English or their native tongue for both lyrical content and their moniker, we wished to somewhat stray from their paths. The OOA is in a way an 'einzelliganger' in the Belgian 'scene'. Furthermore, since E. has some affinity with the language it was a logical choice in the end. To conclude, we ask you what blasphemy is more honest and profound? That which merely inverts or that which uses the intricacies of a mindset against it? Besides, the catholic church stained many things even more crucial than some languages and the meaning behind them.

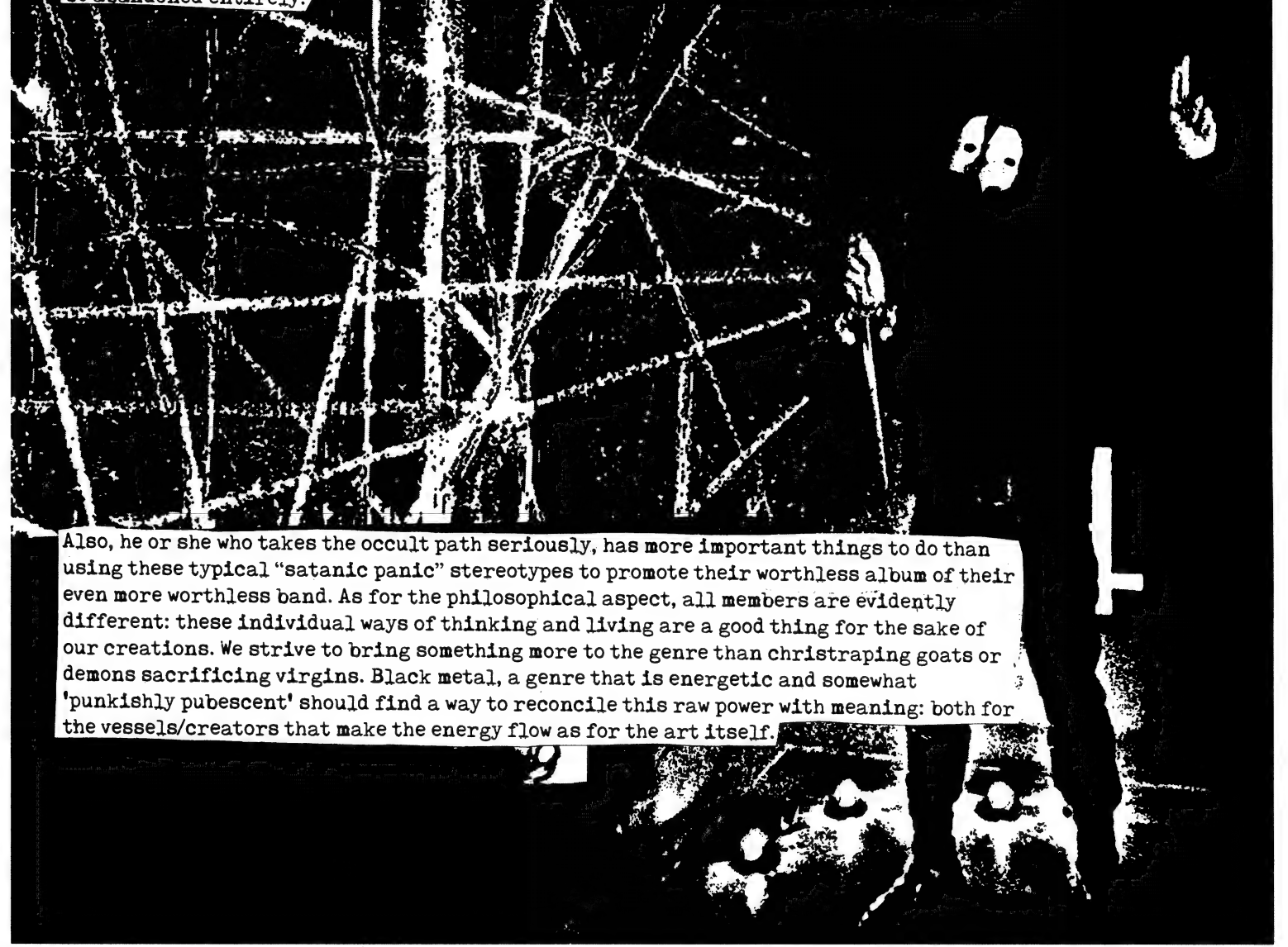


One of the core aspects of early black metal, Satanism, seems to be abandoned by a lot of newer bands, and when it's used explicitly, then it's not seldom just a gimmick. The void has been filled by bands focusing on an aura of occultism and dark, ritual spirituality. Yet, when one reads interviews with these bands, they often get stuck in a typical form of escapism... Do you think we need a more thoughtful, original substance in BM? Is there a philosophical stance you want to take with OOA?

We are more or less hedonistic nihilists, drawing inspiration from different writers (prose, literature and poetry) as well as the grand maze of individual psychological exploration that is occultism. Pure escapism without thought is indeed the dominant view within most art, we wish to do something different, even though we're no 'coven' in the strict sense of the word (and don't pretend to be one). Our goal as a collective is to express our own artistic view and gain enlightenment and self-realization through the process of our creations in every aspect of it while incorporating aspects of everything of our interest to mold this into one eclectic whole. Even though every individual member behind the OOA of course is different in lifestyle and philosophical views, this is what we aim for: the 'raison d'être' of our collective.



What you describe as a gimmick IS indeed the case for most black metal bands - ironically almost all of them want to be taken seriously, which is rather sad (or even pathetic). Some bands have knowledge of the occult, but only SOME. The biggest part have no experience or real interest AT ALL, no personal gnosis, nothing. The only thing they care about is feeding their mindless ego instead of searching for enlightenment or facing a direct experience by creating philosophical foundations beforehand. The vulgar medieval satanism many bands like to use is mainly a pose to shock without underlined content. This tongue-in-cheek shock-for-the-sake-of-it satanism is - honestly - outdated and to be abandoned entirely.



Also, he or she who takes the occult path seriously, has more important things to do than using these typical "satanic panic" stereotypes to promote their worthless album of their even more worthless band. As for the philosophical aspect, all members are evidently different: these individual ways of thinking and living are a good thing for the sake of our creations. We strive to bring something more to the genre than christraping goats or demons sacrificing virgins. Black metal, a genre that is energetic and somewhat 'punkishly pubescent' should find a way to reconcile this raw power with meaning: both for the vessels/creators that make the energy flow as for the art itself.

What's the formal essence of black metal for you qua visuals and sounds (aside from the content thus), and how does this translates to the OOA project? What bands have previously brought these aspects in that specific way?

Visually, black metal CAN'T be about the individuals making the music. The rockstar narcissism that many seem to look for, be it in black metal or in any other artistic expression is WRONG. Black metal also is about the overall atmosphere, therefore playing in your everyday clothes doesn't do right by the sound. You're not playing dreamy postrock, you're an entity behind discomfoting music: act and look as such in everything band-

related. Black metal needs to be a 'breathing' genre, one that bears some sense of atavistic/primitive power, danger even. Only some bands/individuals knew and know this, and while we might not agree with all they represent,

or stand for, those have influenced our presence. To namedrop a few:

Mayhem (Dead and Attila),

Dissection, Wormlust, Portal, GG

Allin (as black metal has taken

much influence from his no-nonsense aggression), Celestial Bloodshed (Steingrim),

Hetroertzen, ... All those have in a way had a bewildering effect on us in one way or another,

something we wish to achieve as well

- but in our own way.

Musically, black metal should be and feel like a representation of the dark aspects of the mind and spirit. This seems abstract or even vague, but leaves room for plenty of interpretations and experiment: black metal doesn't necessarily need to be stereotypical carbon copy of the 1st wave of the Nbrwegian sound of the 90ies. Look at many great acts, (nowadays) that incorporate elements of other genres and/or search for the boundaries of both order and chaos.

Even in the early days there were acts like Ved Buens Ende, Blut Aus Nord or Abruptum that brought something quite different from the dominant sound during that time. Our own interpretation however is - mostly - a rather nostalgic one: we combine aggressive tremolo-picked riffs with melodic parts, some repetitiveness and room for some experiment/improvisation (be it in instruments, sound or otherwise). This way of channeling music is very natural to us: it might not be the most original or innovative black metal out there, but it's an honest artistic view that bears both quality and the promise of further development in the future.

Today's (creative/innovative) Belgian black metal scene is quasi non-existent. That's specifically curious if you take a look at the surrounding countries, where a lot of interesting things are happening as far as black metal goes. Is it just a coincidence that it's quiet on Belgium's black metal front, or do you think there are structural causes? Do you consider this inactivity to be a disadvantage for OOA?

The main reason why we started with the OOA was because we didn't want to be part of the garbage bin that passes for a scene in Belgium in the first place. Except for a few bands and individuals, Belgium has less than nothing to offer. Check out our country's history and one will surely see a poor reflection of that and the personality of the stereotypical Belgian individual. Also you'll easily find out the fate almost every movement awaits here...

So, to be brutally honest: the OOA was indeed meant to make art separately from the existing scene in Belgium, away from the confines of the everyone-knows-everyone telenovella drama ethics and backstabbing. A disadvantage when it comes to exposure? Perhaps indeed, especially since the silence you speak of is seldom breached by something worth mentioning. We are however not truly bothered by this, we'll continue carving out our path.



MARK MCCOY

Charles Bronson accompanied me on numerous runs and bicycle rides, Charles Bronson and Floorpunch. They're the sonic endorphins that tilted me over my maximum endurance level; the bands that literally made me puke before. I don't know for Floorpunch, but Charles Bronson's frontman, Mark McCoy, is still very active in today's creative hard music scene: as a musician, a visual artist and perhaps most notably as owner of Youth Attack!

- interview with Mark McCoy

A while ago I read a 'on music' wherein Haruki Murakami talks in detail about some classical compositions and performances with the Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa. Maybe we can do something similar for the following songs? (-> you can mention anything that comes up: what you like/dislike about these songs or the genre, concrete parts of the songs that are remarkable in any way, anecdotes or thoughts that come to mind when hearing these tracks... could be anything really)

Like Weeds by His Hero Is Gone (from: Monuments to Thieves)

D-beats always offend me, but this song fails for many reasons: the melodramatic calm-before-the-storm intro, the awkward blastbeat transition and the downshift into the emo gallop cook this goose to a crisp. The "threatening" political lyrics are especially embarrassing given how many do-nothing losers this band inspired.

You Will Be Shot by John Zorn's Naked City (from: Naked City)

If there was ever a time when this was innovative, let's be grateful it's forgotten. This song's main problem is that it achieves nothing since the overplayed tonal/tempo shifts are instantly predictable, thus boring.

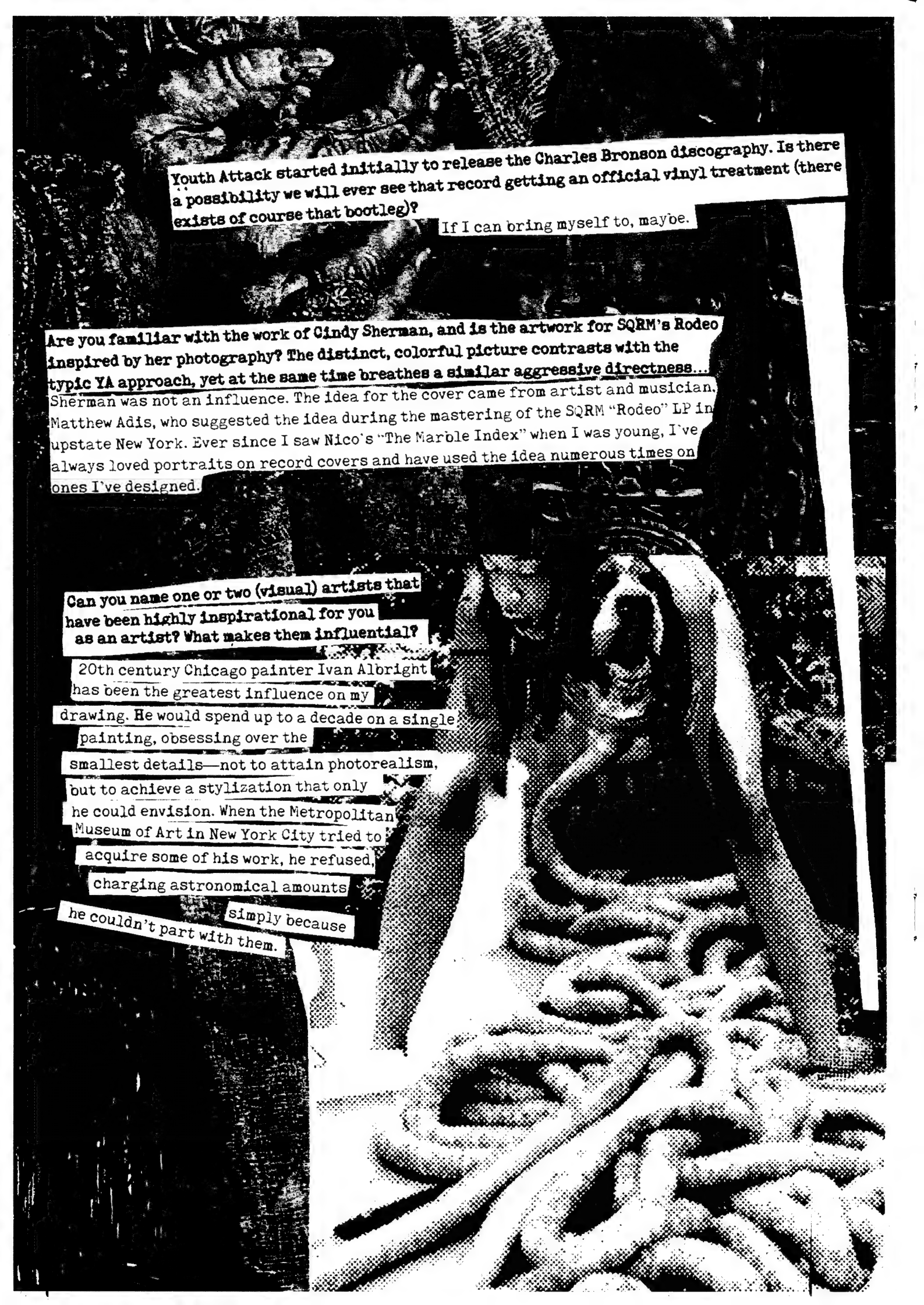
Hygecraft (Eardgiefu) by Wóddræa Mylenstede (from: Créda Beaducwealm)

Achieving a morbid/melancholic/evil atmosphere requires more than just guitar noodling and reverb. When lo-fi black metal tries to economize, it often sounds lazy. If they didn't put that much thought into it, why should I?

Notha Thang by The Coneheads (from: L.P. 1 a.k.a...)

I've admired Mark Winter for being an outlier and a visionary. This style isn't my cup of tea, but the production is perfect.





Youth Attack started initially to release the Charles Bronson discography. Is there a possibility we will ever see that record getting an official vinyl treatment (there exists of course that bootleg)?

If I can bring myself to, maybe.

Are you familiar with the work of Cindy Sherman, and is the artwork for SQRM's Rodeo inspired by her photography? The distinct, colorful picture contrasts with the typic YA approach, yet at the same time breathes a similar aggressive directness... Sherman was not an influence. The idea for the cover came from artist and musician, Matthew Adis, who suggested the idea during the mastering of the SQRM "Rodeo" LP in upstate New York. Ever since I saw Nico's "The Marble Index" when I was young, I've always loved portraits on record covers and have used the idea numerous times on ones I've designed.

Can you name one or two (visual) artists that have been highly inspirational for you as an artist? What makes them influential?

20th century Chicago painter Ivan Albright has been the greatest influence on my drawing. He would spend up to a decade on a single painting, obsessing over the smallest details—not to attain photorealism, but to achieve a stylization that only he could envision. When the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City tried to acquire some of his work, he refused, charging astronomical amounts simply because he couldn't part with them.

I guess in most of the bands you were part of you were the vocalist. With Absolute Power you're taking up the guitar. In what way is this a different experience? I read somewhere you want to contribute something new with everything you release; what is the added value of Absolute Power (don't get me wrong here; I really like that AP record)?

With Absolute Power, I wanted to write my idea of a New York Hard Core record. It was only "new" in the sense that I had more input in the writing and construction than with other projects. In this case, I was trying my hand at writing within certain styles and to make them congeal on an LP that I could enjoy from start to end.

How does a band gets signed to Youth Attack: are you looking for a specific sound or attitude? Is this, in general, based upon demo's you hear or stage performances you saw, or is it more a matter of being somehow related to your social circle?

It's simply a matter of me wanting to play in the band myself, whether I do or not. The inner circle I work with are generally like-minded people and adhere to a high standard, which explains why I often work with the same guys.

Have you ever listened to a record and wished it was a YA release?

No.

You issued the monograph 'When I die bury me in the clothes of my youth'. At first glance the pictures hold an obvious tristesse, but implicitly there seems to be a more encouraged, nonconformist bearing as well. Is the book that punk? The title is extremely sad though...

I had a collection of cellphone photos of people sleeping in random places—at malls, on trains, in public restrooms. To me they capture the unbearableness of living, which I regard as a cautionary tale.

Do you think you listen to hardcore and black metal because of some elements of the aesthetics appeal to you; or is it more like the other way around: does your art look a certain way because of influences from underground music imagery.

In the end, it's all feeling, but it's what comprises the feeling that matters. There's no doubt a reciprocity between input and output, since I'm informed by my tastes and operate according to their whims.

You mentioned in an interview (with Noisey) that you're not nostalgic when it comes to music. But don't you have the feeling that the hardcore scene is and probably will always be thriving on an aspect of nostalgia: we listen to music that is directly influenced by a formula out of the 70's/80's, we hold on to xeroxed zines and cut'n paste aesthetics, mediums as tapes or vinyl kept their relevance (even before today's general revival) etc... Doesn't that bring you in a contradictory situation?

I like the idea that there's a space for art that exists in between tradition and modernity. Here I take what I know and work with it to create something new. My focus is entirely on maximizing the present. The sentimental affectation of nostalgia is an avoidance of this. Where the necessary struggles of life demand an active

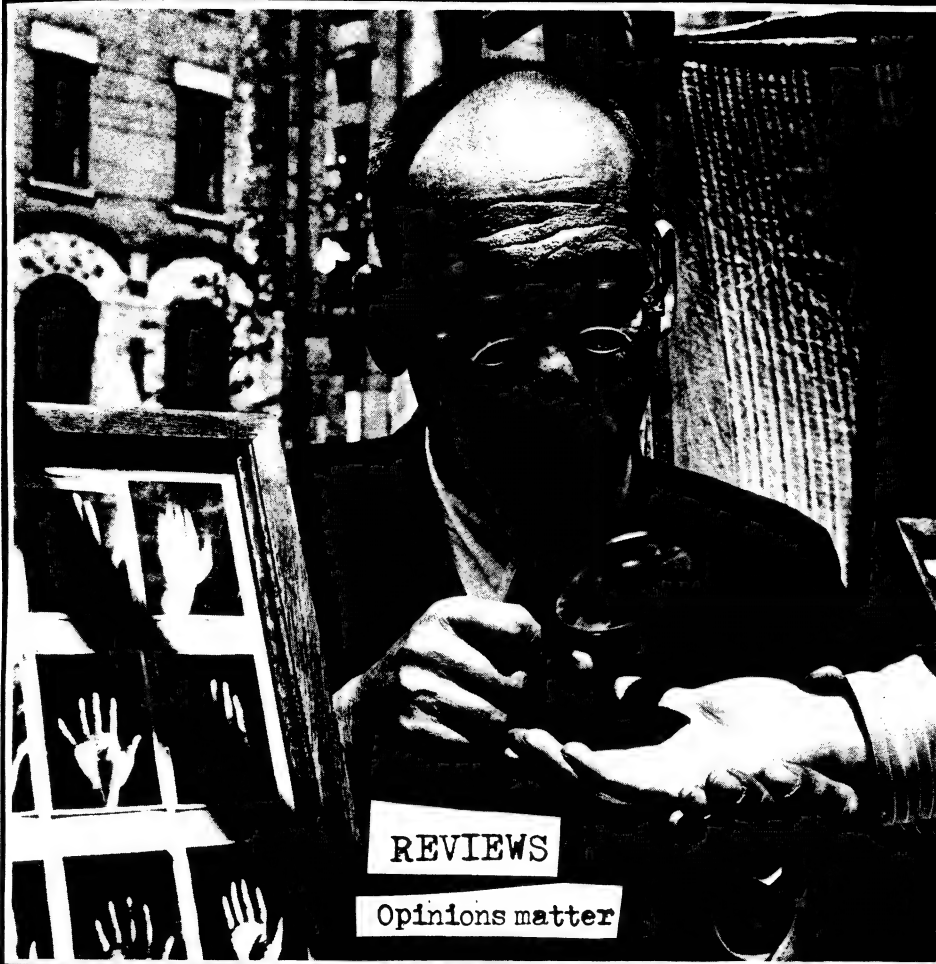
involvement, nostalgia offers escapism. Traditions, by contrast, live and breathe and are open to reinterpretation. As I get older, I've grown more traditional, striving for a kind of absoluteness in music that exists for its own sake. The more I

define myself as an individual, the less I want to broadcast myself outside of my work. Instead, I've taken up the role as the curator-craftsman—essentially a laborer—for the purpose of gaining more intimacy with what I'm doing. I regard my years of making music as structuring meaning out of chaos. If I can create something truly good, this disorder is only unexpected order and a way of

challenging the preconceived. If all that still exists for hardcore and black metal is revision, then it's fair to say these genres were perfected and now we're stuck with vanity and decadence—their logical conclusion. To challenge this, I've become slower and slower. I tend to think I've been working backwards for the majority of my time in music, starting in recklessness and honing in with increased focus and clarity until the work is all but bereft of surprises, a tendency I attribute to my hatred of randomness.

Within hardcore it's somehow bon ton to refer to these early, classic bands and releases. Do you think we will keep referring to these bands in 10 - 20 years, or will that pass along together with the generation that actively witnessed those? We're already 2017 now, so what bands from the 00's earned their place in the hardcore/punk canon according to you? What are the new milestones?

There are probably less than 10 hardcore bands that really matter; the rest pad out a history, but without the standouts there would be no history. The best are from the 80's and I can only name two or three past the 90's that are worth any mention. Only these best deserve to live on since those who wrote the blueprints can never be outdone. Time should mercifully bury the rest.



REVIEWS

Opinions matter

Maléfices – Asarlai

Vinyl release of Maléfices' third demo. In about 20 minutes, you're invited to chew your way through seven pithy BM songs. Short songs thus, but actual songs nonetheless: soundwise, Maléfices achieves to implement at least one skilful idea in each track. One would find this to be self-evident, but we're talking raw black metal here, so, Porgy, it ain't necessarily so. Despite the fact that this is but an older demo, it's still a reissue worth your attention. On a side note: whenever Gandolfini appears in a movie, I got the idea Tony Soprano somehow made his entrance to that story. And what Tony Soprano is to Gandolfini, is an Antichrist Kramer painting to Inquisition. Now, that's setting courageous expectations...

(12" on Final Agony)

Civilized – Chopping Block

A pissed off Youth of Today. And then some. Essential old school hardcore.

(LP on Youth Attack!)

Whoredom Rife – Dommedagskvad

Whoredom Rife play this thing called traditional black metal by the rules. In fact, they master that game: song writing and compositions, musicianship, visuals, you name it, it's all top notch. Yet, it's often the small deficiencies that arouse interest. The vocals on that Weakling record. The production on Transilvanian Hunger. The Tower of Pisa. The Humbert Humbert... You understand where this is heading to, and it's not direction Whoredom Rife. But that's just a personal matter of taste.

(LP on Terratur Possessions)

Perverted Ceremony – Sabbat of Behezaël

The band that likes good ol' Beherit so much, that they made an album in their place. Even the photography has the faux-pas level extraordinaire of the black metal Pleistocene. You expected something original? Please, they're named 'Perverted Ceremony'. Nevertheless, they got me hooked.

(LP on Nuclear War Now)

Chambre Froide - Rouges Chapelles

Mean, mean music from Bordeaux, France. Expect fast, malicious black metal with a shitload of violent breaks. And they use the perfect production for this style: thin, acute sounding strings and a prominent, corpulent drum sound. But Chambre Froide doesn't just take part in the 'aggression' competition: though sparse and subtle, there are enough eerie melodic elements to keep things attractive and varied. Credits for careful use of choral samples, and extra credits for not pardoning their French.

(LP on Fallen Empire)

Fever Nest - Black Carrion Fowl

My initial encountering with Fever Nest was via the covers they did for two Cvltnation tribute compilations; Fever Nest's interpretations of Bathory's War and Dead Kennedy's Holiday in Cambodia were among the highlights of those comps. Of course, it's one thing to nail steady hit songs, it's something totally different to create yours from scratch.

Wistfully, on their debut album they're far less convincing. In fact, it all comes down to whether it's possible to be a vigorous, stout metalcore act and at the same time present yourself as a credible black metal project? It's definitely doable to blend the music an sich, and Fever Nest points that out. Though, when it comes to the atmosphere, the two genre's characteristics just don't merge that well, and Fever Nest points that out accurately as well.

(12" on Knife Vision)

Culture Shock - Culture Shock

'With X'ed up hands and laddered laces. We pull our hoods over our faces ... I'll wrap my fingers around your neck and I'll hold that smoke down in your chest'. 'Nuff said, here 's to the ultra-violence! This quintet recalls the militant SxE from 80's bands as SSD or Project X. Asocial, and highly energetic breakdown injected youth crew hardcore. With music that enraged and combative, they can function as the standard-bearer for 'Youth Attack'!

(LP on Youth Attack!)

Black Citadel - Relics of Forgotten Satanist Wisdom

BC is or was a raw USBM band, and this discography LP showcases their dense approach to black metal. With the focus laying on the percussive elements and the monotonous vocals, there's little space left for developing melodic patterns. In addition, the song structures are rather unsophisticated and repetitive. Due to this, it's not the most pleasant record to listen to. But it's BM: pleasance is optional, effectiveness isn't. And if creating mesmerizing music was the main goal, then BC is pretty effective in what they're doing. All in all a nice artefact to have, not the least because of the beautiful silkscreened artwork done by Altare.

(LP on Amor Fati)

Ilmestys - The Moose Hangs from Heaven

Nice to have Fallen Empire combining Ilmestys' two sold out demo tapes on a

record. Expect a dash of gritty, punkinfused early black metal. Deathcrush or The Return, played by a noisy hardcore band. Or whatever. On the first demo Ilmestys drops the level of sophistication with their primitive riffs and thin but clear sounding production, all heavily cankered by distortion. The harshest moments as well as the most 'melodic' elements are to be found on the second demo; safe to say that this is the more diverse side. Although this too remains very primordial, the increased noise facets remind of early Converge and older Grinning Death's Head. This is right up my alley, but I can image that the ones liking their metal to be, well, metal, will pass on this.

(LP on Fallen Empire)

Gjendod - Redstigning

Blind buy, solely based on that ridiculous artwork. Didn't they notice the half-naked fat guy's belly coming from behind that tree? Ridiculous or not, it reminded me somewhat of a promo poster that hung in my nephew's chamber, almost 20 years ago now. Turned out it was for the (then) edgemetal band Abnegation, who had just released their 'Verses of the bleeding' LP. I was a teenager and fucking impressed by these mean gentlemen playing a type of music I didn't know existed. Bit biased by nostalgia thus. But biased or nor, this type of black metal is hard to dislike for anyone into the Scandinavian second wave. Especially the faster tracks do the trick, and we all know the trick box:

blast beats, tremolo-picking, raspy vocals, Under a Funeral Moon, yada dada... But let me return to the artwork. When I had the physical copy in my hands, I could but conclude that once again DTB delivered a hasty, improvident design job. Even a faded memory of a poster out of my teens, looks sharper than that pixelated cover. The music deserved better.

(LP on Darker Than Black)

Wulkanaz - Paralyz

When the BM kicks in, finally, after a lengthy and dull intro, you will promptly notice Wulkanaz' change in sound: there's someone else handling the drums and he obviously has the artistry to do so. The early amateurish tapping made room for blast beats and what not. Guess that's a

win thus. However, Wulkanaz also loses part of its folksy character because of it. Not that it was a pagan metal band before, but a folkloristic, rural ease used to be noticeable. And more than the level of musicianship, that was what distinguished the band from other BM projects. Luckily, that's the sole major difference: the granular, guitarwork, the lofi garage production, the inelegant vocals, the overall eccentricity... all there. All that, plus a ridiculously big poster. What did they have in mind when deciding to include that thing; Borges' map? To summarise: fine release, but there's better Wulkanaz material to listen to, probably all other Wulkanaz material.

(LP on Helter Skelter)

Lluvia - Enigma

No introduction needed, this band already gained a moderate BM cult status. I wasn't completely sold on Lluvia, until I saw them live in Antwerp last year. In fact, only two things kept that show from

being nearly impeccable: a, it was only a few songs short and b, they were awkwardly out of place on a really mediocre death/thrash line-up. Anyway, Enigma. In fact, the album doesn't differ all that much from the acclaimed previous effort, Eternidad Solemne. Again, a fascinating, atmospheric sonic wandering through saturated wetlands. But did Lord Vast rediscover his Godspeed You Black Emperor records? There are definitely hints of post rock on Enigma, and it suits the music fine. One would rightly so expect this record to appear on numerous end of the year lists, but if all goes according to Lord Vast's plan, that won't be the case. Apparently, this pressing is limited to 150 triptychs only, and on top of that Lord Vast explicitly asked the owners not to upload his music... For a band with the aforementioned status, that's certainly unrealistic and also somewhat unfair.

(3x10" on Amor Fati)

Byrrth - Saviors of Armageddon

Two things about this USBM record. First: does that singer ever shut up? He just chatters on and on and on... As if Seinfeld's Mister Steinbrenner joined the local Kvlt ensemble. On top of that, the vocals are utterly deformed by distortion and feedback. Thus: all over, non-stop. Yet, surprisingly, they are evened out. What brings me to the second thing: not only the vocals are omnipresent, but so is the guitarwork. Riff upon riff upon riff... It makes one hell of an intense black metal record.

(LP on Iron Bonehead)

Mons Veneris: Untitled

Another LP from this prolific Portuguese raw one-man BM project; actually it's a reissue of an older record. Mons Veneris has always been somewhat of a mysterious band and this bleak record only substantiates that even more. The verminous lo-fi demo production quality depraves the nine songs from their individual characteristics, making the album sound like one lengthy, primitive BM track. No ambient, no violins, 'no human lyrics' or other Mons Veneris aberrations, just dirty, fouled up raw BM. Musical value? Non-existing. Intriguing? Yes, very.

(LP on Black Gangrene)

Vermapyre / Vehrmoedr

Irae - Crimes against Humanity

Irae, a fixture within the Portuguese BM scene. Being active for 15 years, it shouldn't be a surprise that this record reveals a mature band that got its act together, completely. Maybe, that's also a minor point of critique here: this sure is high quality, fast, traditional black metal, but it isn't surprising at all. For those who enjoy it a little less glistening, without descending in total obscurity, I would rather recommend the Rites of Unholy Destruction compilation. Overall, first-class record, something to please the unsightly headbangers. And Satan, of course. Because it's that kind of band.

(LP on Altare)

Vermapyre is a one-man project from Dwid Hellion, frontman of Integrity. Tons of experience here thus. With Vermapyre the man creates bleak, lo-fi raw black metal: deconstructing the sound and song structures, until only a quintessential grimness remains. Raw BM is a saturated genre with a thin line between nonsense and valuable output and it's difficult to conclude on which side Vermapyre will eventually reside based on only three short songs, but I'm moderately optimistic. Can't say that about Vehrmoedr though. B-side opens with a

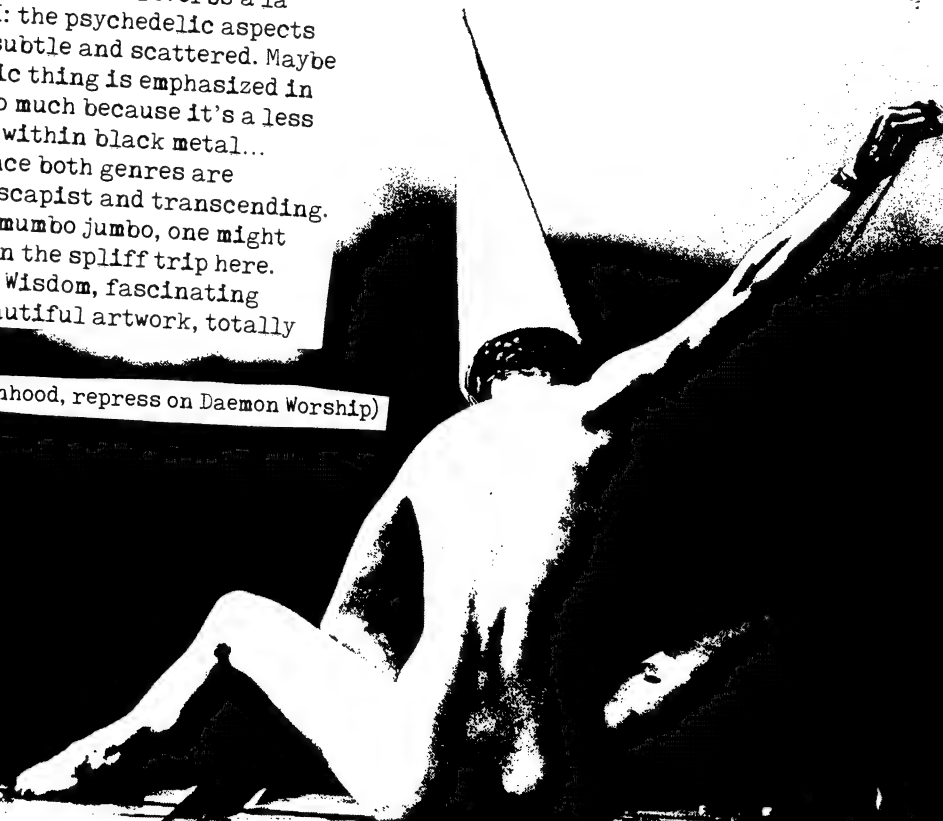
chunk of chaotic BM that doesn't go anywhere, then suddenly transforms into a violin-experiment. I must admit it adds something to whatever he's doing, but it's a violin... it's hard not to add some colour when using that instrument... think string adagio, Psycho, or whatever pseudo sad-romantic-o. So while it's the most noteworthy part of the Vehrmoedr side, that actually says more about the rest, because that guy just doesn't know (or doesn't show he knows) how to play an instrument, at all.

(7" on Holy Terror)

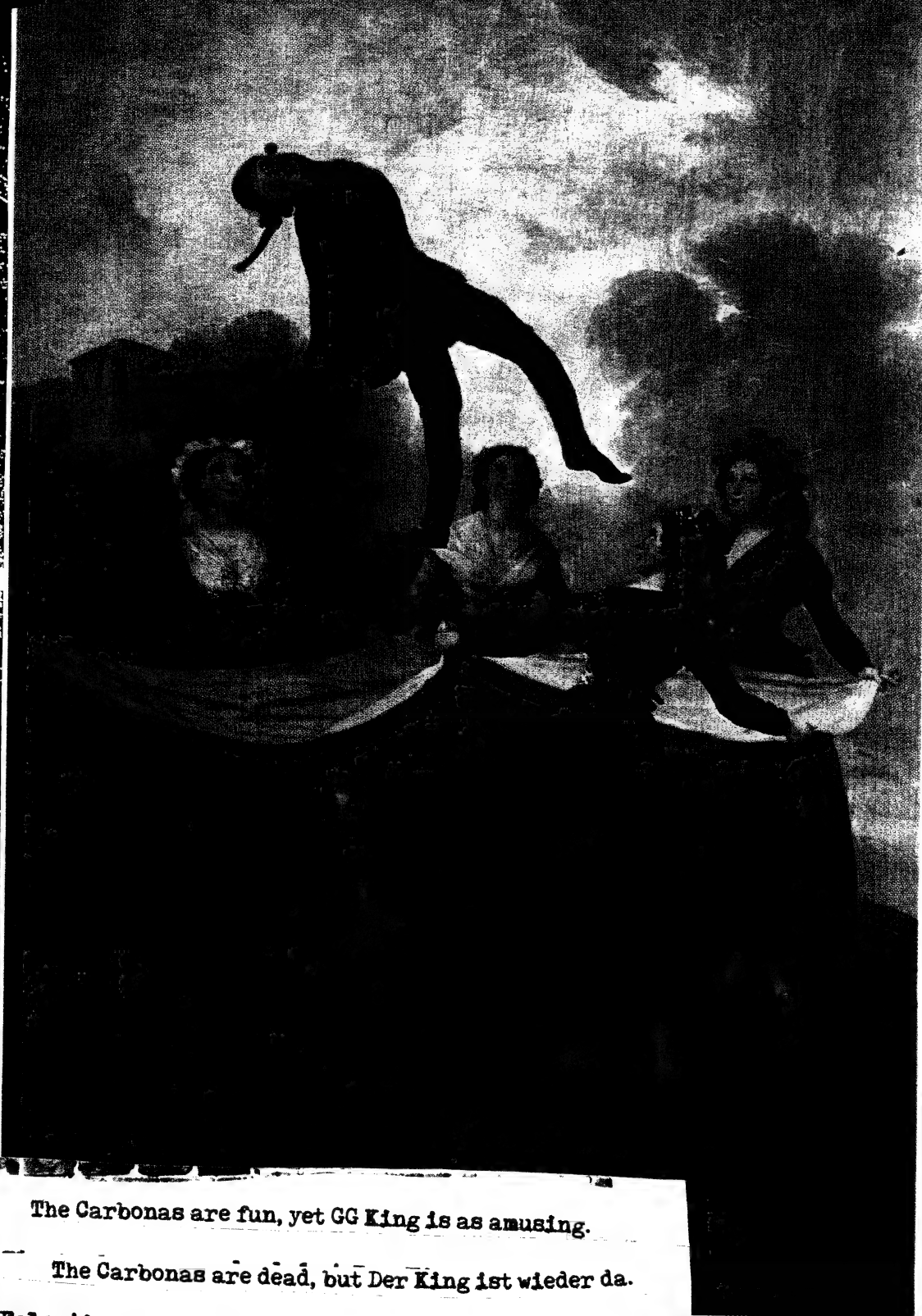
Wormlust - The Feral Wisdom

An Icelandic project that combines black metal, dark ambient and psychedelic music. Don't expect Black Floyd sitar plucking or extreme cave reverbs à la Burzum Döul II: the psychedelic aspects are all in all subtle and scattered. Maybe that psychedelic thing is emphasized in reviews (etc.) so much because it's a less explored niche within black metal... Remarkable since both genres are otherworldly, escapist and transcending. Anyway, enough mumbo jumbo, one might think that I'm on the spliff trip here. Wormlust, Feral Wisdom, fascinating black metal, beautiful artwork, totally dope.

(LP on Demonhood, repress on Daemon Worship)



GG KING

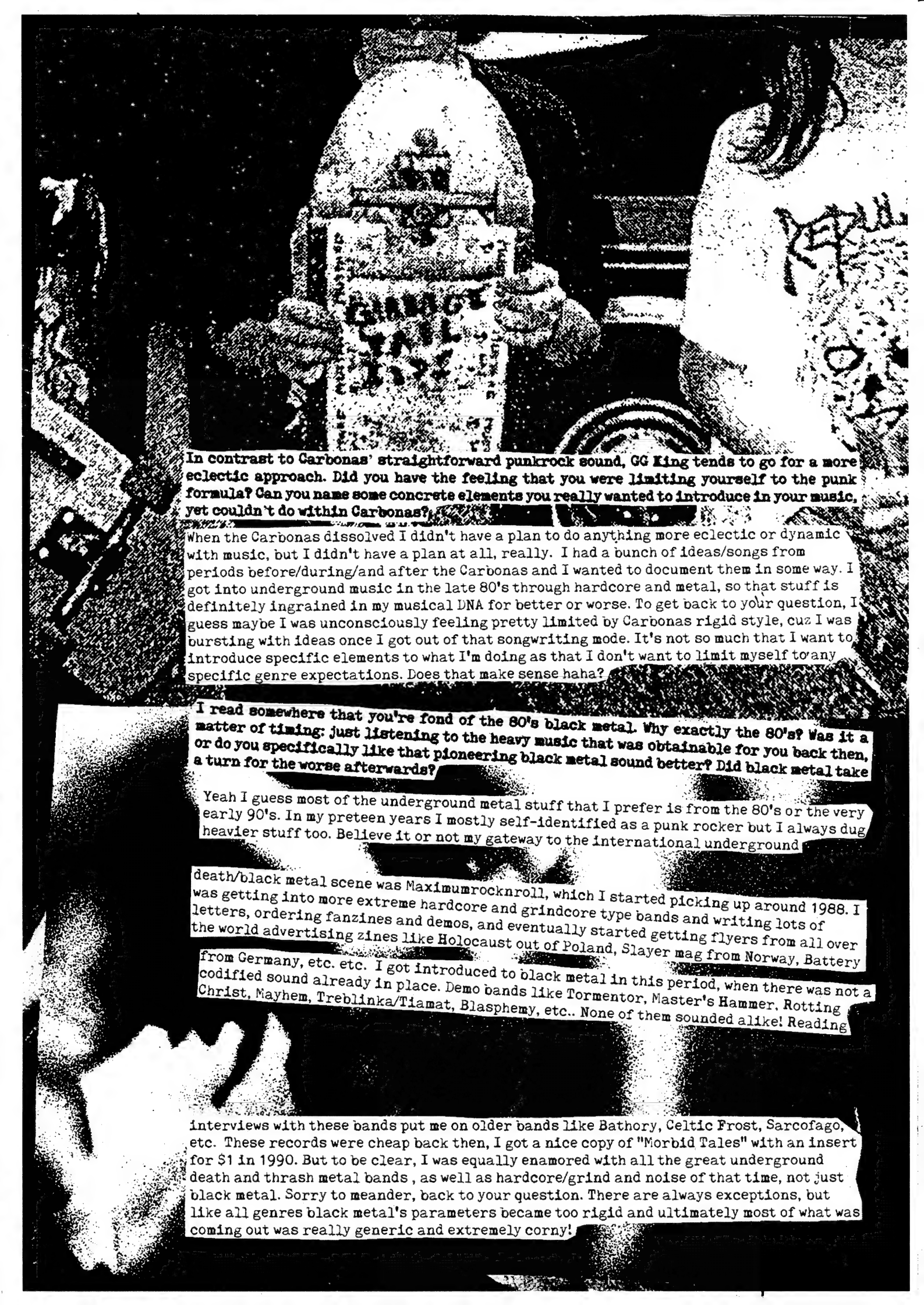


The Carbonas are fun, yet GG King is as amusing.

The Carbonas are dead, but Der King ist wieder da.

Eclectic, versatile, vicious, captivating punk.

Interview with Greg King.



In contrast to Carbonas' straightforward punkrock sound, GG King tends to go for a more eclectic approach. Did you have the feeling that you were limiting yourself to the punk formula? Can you name some concrete elements you really wanted to introduce in your music, yet couldn't do within Carbonas?

When the Carbonas dissolved I didn't have a plan to do anything more eclectic or dynamic with music, but I didn't have a plan at all, really. I had a bunch of ideas/songs from periods before/during/and after the Carbonas and I wanted to document them in some way. I got into underground music in the late 80's through hardcore and metal, so that stuff is definitely ingrained in my musical DNA for better or worse. To get back to your question, I guess maybe I was unconsciously feeling pretty limited by Carbonas rigid style, cuz I was bursting with ideas once I got out of that songwriting mode. It's not so much that I want to introduce specific elements to what I'm doing as that I don't want to limit myself to any specific genre expectations. Does that make sense haha?

I read somewhere that you're fond of the 80's black metal. Why exactly the 80's? Was it a matter of timing: just listening to the heavy music that was obtainable for you back then, or do you specifically like that pioneering black metal sound better? Did black metal take a turn for the worse afterwards?

Yeah I guess most of the underground metal stuff that I prefer is from the 80's or the very early 90's. In my preteen years I mostly self-identified as a punk rocker but I always dug heavier stuff too. Believe it or not my gateway to the international underground

death/black metal scene was Maximumrocknroll, which I started picking up around 1988. I was getting into more extreme hardcore and grindcore type bands and writing lots of letters, ordering fanzines and demos, and eventually started getting flyers from all over the world advertising zines like Holocaust out of Poland, Slayer mag from Norway, Battery from Germany, etc. etc. I got introduced to black metal in this period, when there was not a codified sound already in place. Demo bands like Tormentor, Master's Hammer, Rotting Christ, Mayhem, Treblinka/Tiamat, Blasphemy, etc.. None of them sounded alike! Reading

interviews with these bands put me on older bands like Bathory, Celtic Frost, Sarcophago, etc. These records were cheap back then, I got a nice copy of "Morbid Tales" with an insert for \$1 in 1990. But to be clear, I was equally enamored with all the great underground death and thrash metal bands, as well as hardcore/grind and noise of that time, not just black metal. Sorry to meander, back to your question. There are always exceptions, but like all genres black metal's parameters became too rigid and ultimately most of what was coming out was really generic and extremely corny!



Esoteric Lore starts with the intro Bavarian Life Code. The reference to Darkthrone is obvious, yet somewhat surprising for a punk record. What is the Bavarian Life Code? (How) do you implement it in your life?


Haha I've never tried to define the Bavarian Life Code, I imagine it relates somehow to schnitzel consumption. I don't eat meat anymore so for me I guess it would relate to my occasional Bavarian cream filled donut excesses. I always liked the "Kathaarian Life Code" intro on Blaze in the Northern Sky and I wanted a similar effect as the opening of my album, obviously put through my own peculiar filter haha.

GG King records often have that typical high contrast, cut'n paste design, yet really nicely done and somewhat tongue in cheek. Are you responsible for those? What was the idea behind the Esoteric Lore cover for example?

Yeah, I usually do most of the art for my releases. I was never much of an artist as a kid but I got pretty handy with doing cut and paste on the photocopy machine from doing tons of flyers for gigs and such. It's been a while since I put together the Esoteric Lore record so my memory is a bit hazy on what exactly I had in mind. I guess I was going for a sort of inept mysteriousness haha! A contrast between the normalcy of sitting on your couch watching television and the supernatural unknown.

The compilation tape The Teenage Posi-Grindcore Satanist years was released under the moniker of GG King. I assume these are songs from your previous bands... quite a diverse compilation. Does the title implies that you consider grindcore and metal years (generally) to be an adolescence passing phase? How much of a satanist were you by the way?

Those particular interests just happened to heavily define my own adolescence, I'm sure there are plenty of grown adults out there who love grindcore haha. I don't much keep up with the grind or metal scenes of now, but I still totally appreciate the formative records I was introduced to many moons ago. I wasn't much of a satanist besides worshipping Bathory and spray-painting inverted crosses wherever I happened to be skateboarding with my crew.



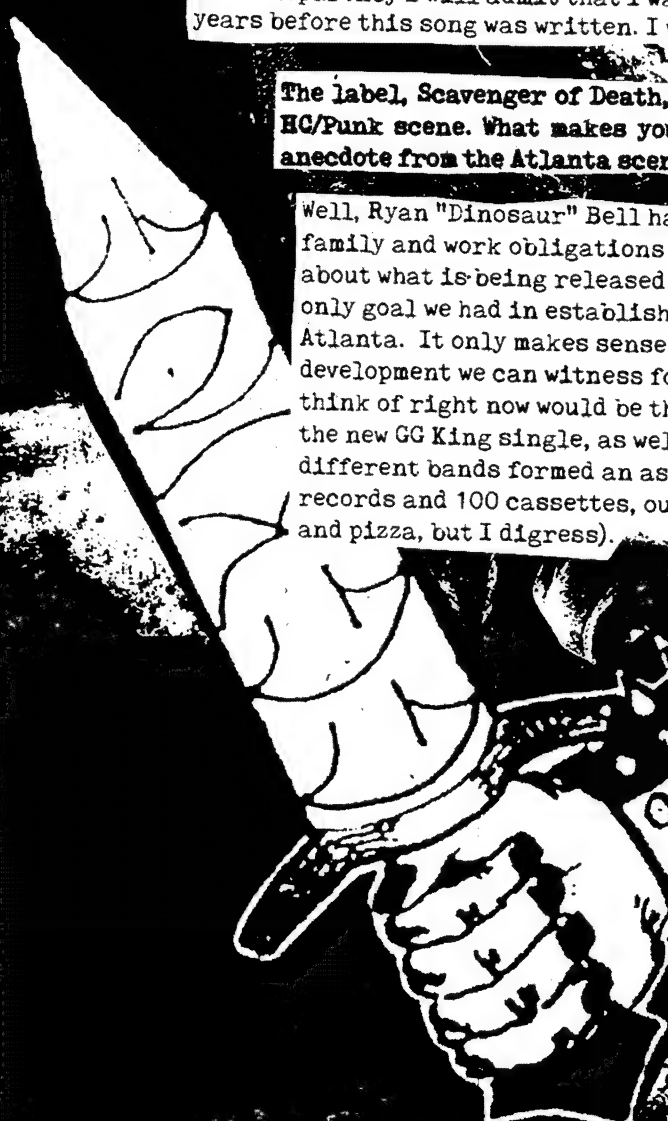
When did the switch towards punk rock occur? Is that the ultimate genre for you as a musician?

I was into punk and hardcore before I got into underground metal, it paved the way to my appreciating more volatile sounds (though my intro to "rebellious" music was definitely bands like Twisted Sister, Iron Maiden, Y&T, etc in the mid 80's). I don't believe in there being an "ultimate" genre for me as a musician, but I guess punk defines the "shoot first, ask questions later" approach I generally take.

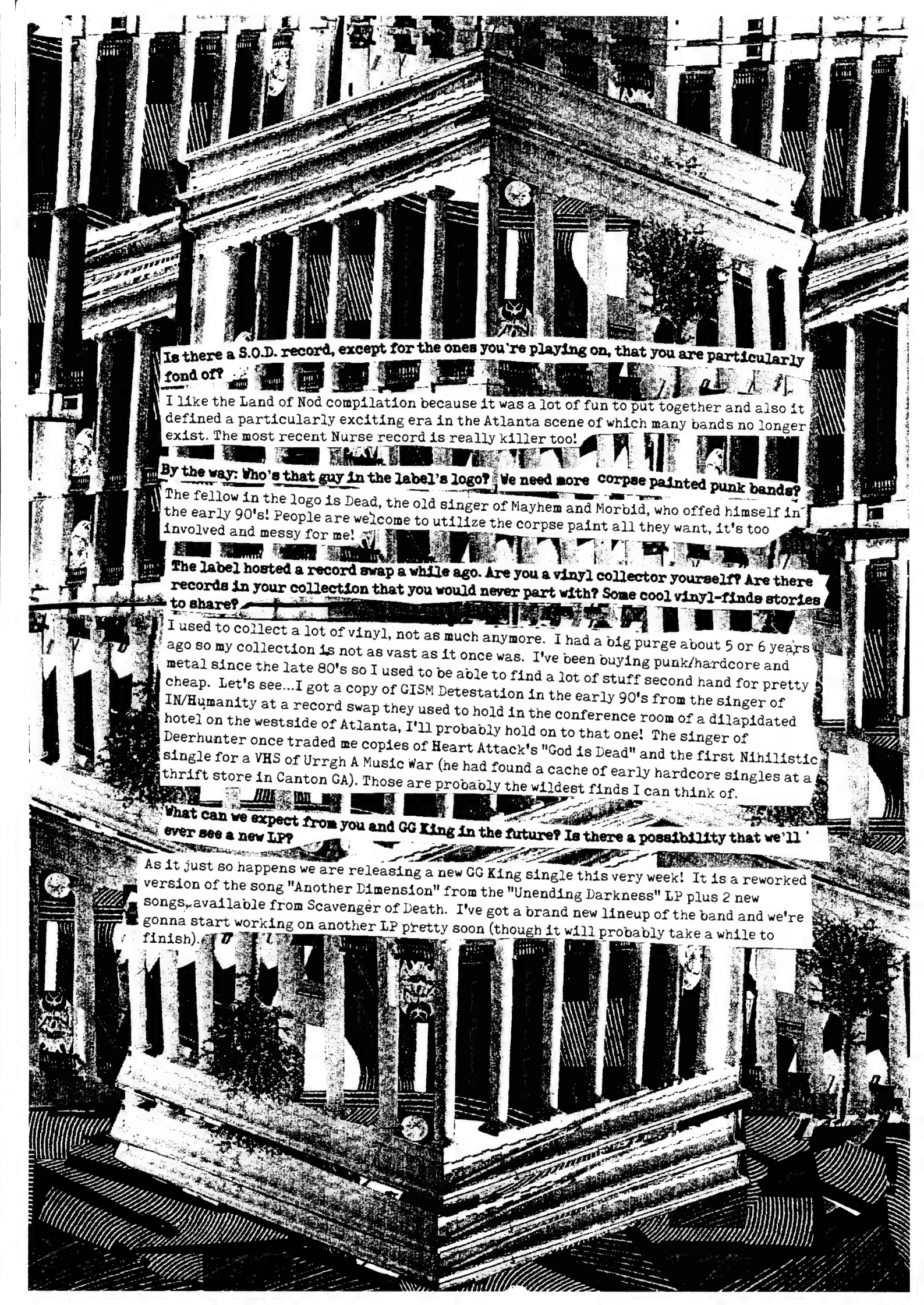
What's your issue with Bon Jovi; you didn't like him on Ally McBeal?

I assume this is in reference to the song "Kill Bon Jovi" haha. We were angry middle schoolers and we needed a figurehead of cockrock to scapegoat I suppose. In the interest of transparency I will admit that I was a fan of the song "She's a Little Runaway" a few years before this song was written. I was not aware of the Bon Jovi/Ally McBeal collusion.

The label, Scavenger of Death, where you're co-owner of, seems to be an ode to the Atlanta HC/Punk scene. What makes you so fond of the Atlanta scene? Can you tell us a story or anecdote from the Atlanta scene, that really defines it's characteristics?



Well, Ryan "Dinosaur" Bell has been running the label on his own for a while now due to my family and work obligations not allowing the time for it. But he generally consults me about what is being released and I'll help stuff records and tapes when I'm available. The only goal we had in establishing the label was to document the small scene happening in Atlanta. It only makes sense that we would work with people we know personally and whose development we can witness for ourselves. As far as anecdotes, the best example I can think of right now would be the get together we had last weekend to put together copies of the new GG King single, as well as demos of Hyena and Caesium Mine. A bunch of people from different bands formed an assembly line in my living room to cut, stamp and stuff 500 records and 100 cassettes, out of the kindness of their hearts (actually it was for the beer and pizza, but I digress).



Is there a S.O.D. record, except for the ones you're playing on, that you are particularly fond of?

I like the Land of Nod compilation because it was a lot of fun to put together and also it defined a particularly exciting era in the Atlanta scene of which many bands no longer exist. The most recent Nurse record is really killer too!

By the way: Who's that guy in the label's logo? We need more corpse painted punk bands?

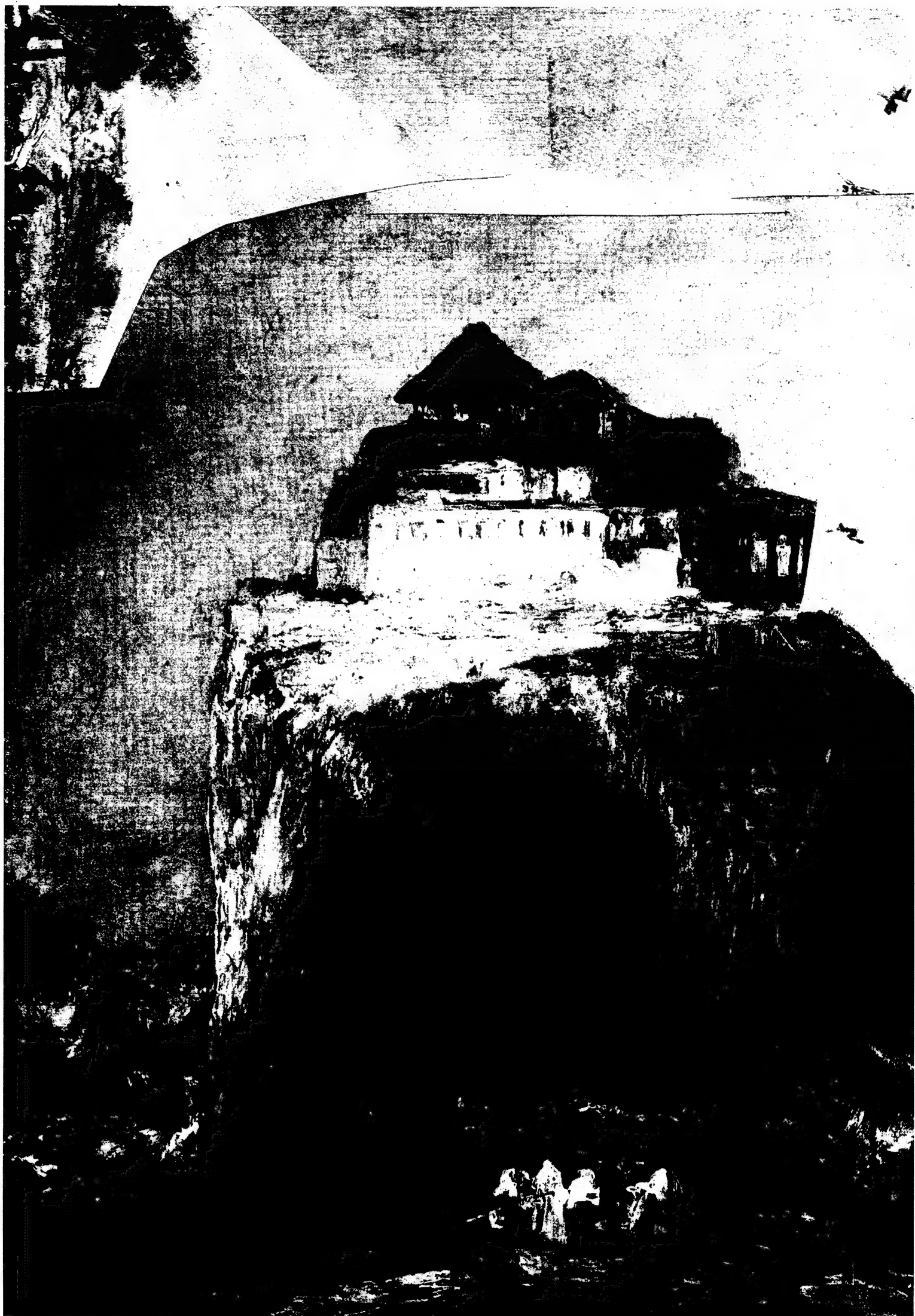
The fellow in the logo is Dead, the old singer of Mayhem and Morbid, who offed himself in the early 90's! People are welcome to utilize the corpse paint all they want, it's too involved and messy for me!

The label hosted a record swap a while ago. Are you a vinyl collector yourself? Are there records in your collection that you would never part with? Some cool vinyl-finds stories to share?

I used to collect a lot of vinyl, not as much anymore. I had a big purge about 5 or 6 years ago so my collection is not as vast as it once was. I've been buying punk/hardcore and metal since the late 80's so I used to be able to find a lot of stuff second hand for pretty cheap. Let's see...I got a copy of GISM Detestation in the early 90's from the singer of IN/Humanity at a record swap they used to hold in the conference room of a dilapidated hotel on the westside of Atlanta, I'll probably hold on to that one! The singer of Deerhunter once traded me copies of Heart Attack's "God is Dead" and the first Nihilistic single for a VHS of Urrgh A Music War (he had found a cache of early hardcore singles at a thrift store in Canton GA). Those are probably the wildest finds I can think of.

What can we expect from you and GG King in the future? Is there a possibility that we'll ever see a new LP?

As it just so happens we are releasing a new GG King single this very week! It is a reworked version of the song "Another Dimension" from the "Unending Darkness" LP plus 2 new songs, available from Scavenger of Death. I've got a brand new lineup of the band and we're gonna start working on another LP pretty soon (though it will probably take a while to finish).



I do not pretend to understand this music. I doubt if anyone, including those playing it, really *understands* it, in the sense that one understands, say, the music of Bach or Billie Holiday. I *feel* this music, or rather, as I said, it opens up a part of my self that normally is tightly closed, and seldom-recognized feelings, emotions, thoughts well up from the opened door and sear my consciousness (Don DeMichael on John Coltrane's *Meditations*, 1965). - Interview with Turia



TURIA

One of the reasons Turia is not your average black metal band is probably because you have a female vocalist. I assume it's a pity, but active participation of females in (especially) black metal is still rather rare... Do you think women in general approach black metal

differently than men? Does this influence Turia's music in a way?

Perhaps it is not a matter of approaching black metal differently as a female, but, first and foremost, of being approached differently by the genre and its (mostly male) fans. However, we do not think that something as arbitrary as your gender necessarily influences the way you approach any type of music. There is not something inherent to black metal that makes it more appealing to males, it is only the (cultural) meanings we attribute to it, which in turn foster the idea that certain types of music may be more 'masculine'. Having a female in Turia does not enable us to speak on behalf of all women/women in general, and by trying to answer questions posed like this we inevitably fall into the essentialist and dichotomous ideals that have created such disparity and 'division' in the genre to begin with.

The sound on both the debut album as well as on Dede Kondre, could be described as trance inducing or meditative (not in a kitschy new age manner, but maybe more like later Coltrane's sound for example). Dede Kondre has some influences that aren't typical black metal, and even remind me a bit of early psychedelic pop music. Do you intentionally create that type of transcendentalism? And if so, would you agree that Turia is a spiritual band?

You are entirely correct in assuming influences from beyond the black metal genre itself. One can easily argue that black metal itself has always been an amalgamation of disparate elements within popular, counter cultural and (post)modern modes of music. The diverse inspirational sources of the founders of this style can attest to that. Nonetheless, black metal has become a distinct style of its own and we do not wish to "transcend" this in the terms set out by the new commercializing strands that co-opt stylistic elements of this music to add a bit of "dark" varnish around a core of indie-pop sensibility. We strive to work from within what we perceive as the core of the genre itself and slowly expand utilising ideas, musical or otherwise. In a sense Turia can be considered a spiritual band because we do not shun to strive for a bigger artistic ideal, although, as you mentioned, not in any new age manner. We also strongly feel we are not alone in this; a lot of the bands or projects we personally admire within this music also seem to work towards this and tend to develop a unique and personal style.

I guess that broadens the spectrum of music that could influence your sound... Is there music, outside of the black metal scene, that is influential for what you do with Turia (+ what specific elements hereof do you want to incorporate into your music)?

To properly answer this question one of course runs into the risk of just listing a bunch of artists with no context and no elaboration. Nevertheless, there are a few artists that have particularly inspired us to pursue some other musical ideas within the confines of our three-piece set up. One notable example would be Germany's Popul Vuh, whose output after their stint in early synth music, leaning more heavily on acoustic instrumentation and global influences from different spiritual music traditions created some of the most inspiring early ambient records, although in the past they would have been considered somewhat kitsch. Their soundtrack for "Aguirre: Der Zorn Gottes" from Werner Herzog resonated with our conception of a kind of punishing rainforest interior. Seattle's Earth have shown great personal and artistic development that serves to inspire us as well, especially the sparse but greatly immersive instrumentation on "Hex: Or Printing in the Infernal Method". Lastly, tying into your earlier comparison with the late Coltrane, would be Alice Coltrane. Her spiritual take on jazz and development of the devotional impulse in free-form jazz is a particularly good example of the kind of spiritualism that we do indeed find very interesting, even though her late period tends to border on the inane new age ambient.

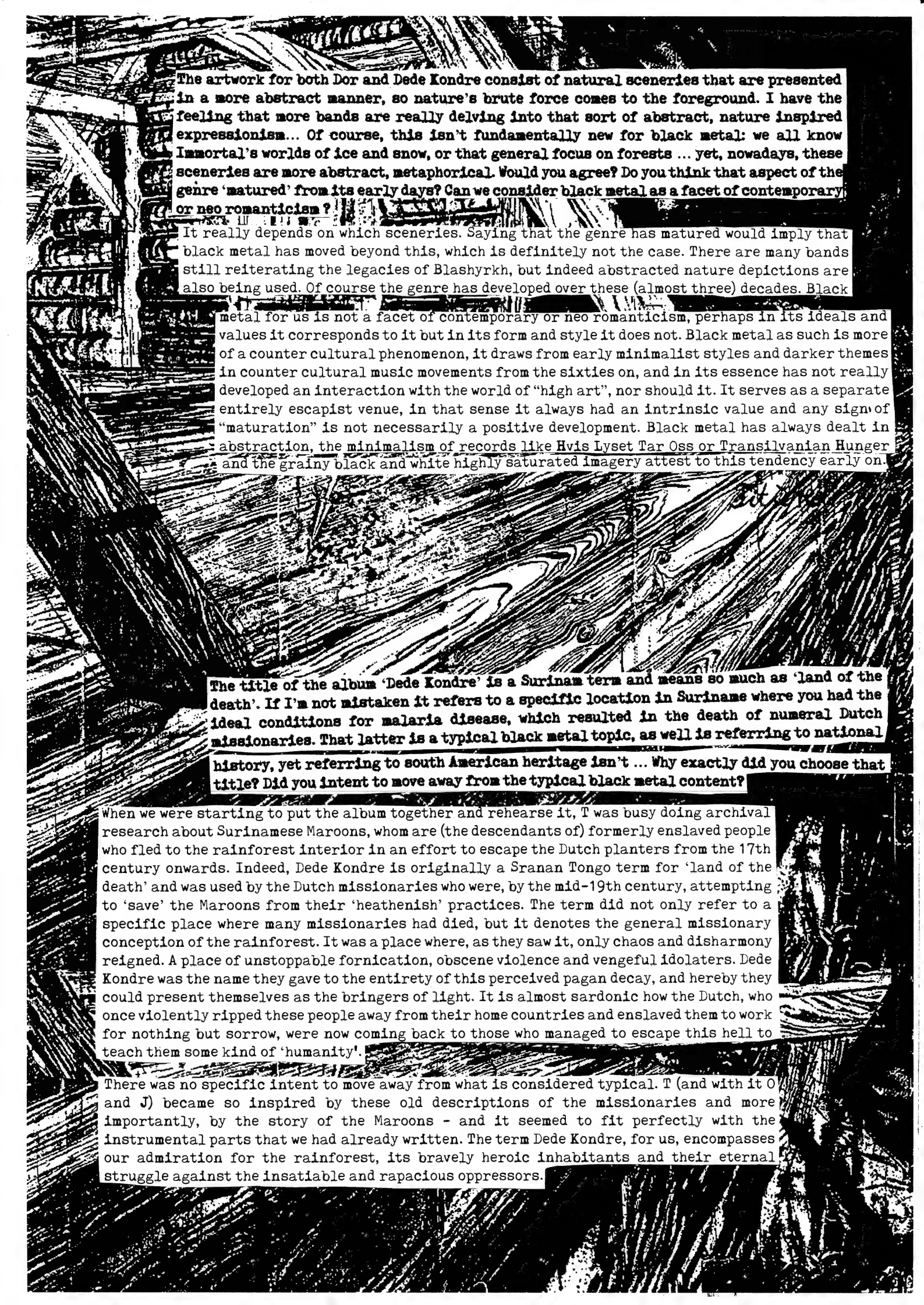
Is Turia's sound (+ general aesthetics) also influenced by other types of art? For example can you name an artist that inspired you, and how is this noticeable within Turia?

In a general sense you could say we are all inspired by certain historical styles of art, the early nationalist romanticism of Caspar David Friedrich, or new forms of post-war abstract expressionism, mainly Mark Rothko, in the kind of demanding overwhelming monotony. But it is pretty tough to pin down. Not one artist particularly inspired us at first but we are finding more parallels with contemporary art as we observe (as complete outsiders) the world of art and developing our own music. Film also serves as inspiration, examples would be the aforementioned "Aguirre" but also contemporary film such as *Ciro Guerra's "Embrace of the Serpent"* and *Aleksey German's "Hard to be a God"*.

I didn't think of it before, but now you mentioned Rothko, it's hard not to visualise his paintings when listening to your music. The fact that you mention Friedrich makes sense as well. In fact, I have always thought of Friedrich's painting 'Mönch am Meer' as functioning on the same sensitive level as Rothko's color field paintings. Anyway, you used the phrase 'overwhelming monotony', which seems adequate to describe these paintings. Of course Rothko evolved into that direction by purifying his work to the bare core of its meaning. Do you somehow want to pursue this with Turia as well: reducing the sound to a quintessence? I understand that it's hard to predict, but what could that essence be? Is it conceivable that this leads Turia, musically speaking, away from BM?

I think if you listen to the progression in our output from our first record to Dede Kondre and to other releases that are as of this writing on the horizon, it's hard to describe this as a reduction to a core or essence. It's more apt to say we started with a pretty bare minimum on the first songs and gradually added new stylistic elements and musical ideas to the core of the music as we went along. It's unlikely this path would ever lead us away from the core of black metal, since this is the creative nucleus around which we build our musical narratives. To be short, we started this project from what we believe to be an abstracted core of this music and slowly built around this. This process is still

unfinished.



The artwork for both Dor and Dede Kondre consist of natural sceneries that are presented in a more abstract manner, so nature's brute force comes to the foreground. I have the feeling that more bands are really delving into that sort of abstract, nature inspired expressionism... Of course, this isn't fundamentally new for black metal: we all know Immortal's worlds of ice and snow, or that general focus on forests ... yet, nowadays, these sceneries are more abstract, metaphorical. Would you agree? Do you think that aspect of the genre 'matured' from its early days? Can we consider black metal as a facet of contemporary or neo romanticism?

It really depends on which sceneries. Saying that the genre has matured would imply that black metal has moved beyond this, which is definitely not the case. There are many bands still reiterating the legacies of Blashyrkh, but indeed abstracted nature depictions are also being used. Of course the genre has developed over these (almost three) decades. Black

metal for us is not a facet of contemporary or neo romanticism, perhaps in its ideals and values it corresponds to it but in its form and style it does not. Black metal as such is more of a counter cultural phenomenon, it draws from early minimalist styles and darker themes in counter cultural music movements from the sixties on, and in its essence has not really developed an interaction with the world of "high art", nor should it. It serves as a separate entirely escapist venue, in that sense it always had an intrinsic value and any sign of "maturation" is not necessarily a positive development. Black metal has always dealt in abstraction, the minimalism of records like Hvis Lyset Tar Oss or Transilvanian Hunger and the grainy black and white highly saturated imagery attest to this tendency early on.

The title of the album 'Dede Kondre' is a Surinam term and means so much as 'land of the death'. If I'm not mistaken it refers to a specific location in Suriname where you had the ideal conditions for malaria disease, which resulted in the death of numeral Dutch missionaries. That latter is a typical black metal topic, as well is referring to national history, yet referring to south American heritage isn't ... Why exactly did you choose that title? Did you intent to move away from the typical black metal content?

When we were starting to put the album together and rehearse it, T was busy doing archival research about Surinamese Maroons, whom are (the descendants of) formerly enslaved people who fled to the rainforest interior in an effort to escape the Dutch planters from the 17th century onwards. Indeed, Dede Kondre is originally a Sranan Tongo term for 'land of the death' and was used by the Dutch missionaries who were, by the mid-19th century, attempting to 'save' the Maroons from their 'heathenish' practices. The term did not only refer to a specific place where many missionaries had died, but it denotes the general missionary conception of the rainforest. It was a place where, as they saw it, only chaos and disharmony reigned. A place of unstoppable fornication, obscene violence and vengeful idolaters. Dede Kondre was the name they gave to the entirety of this perceived pagan decay, and hereby they could present themselves as the bringers of light. It is almost sardonic how the Dutch, who once violently ripped these people away from their home countries and enslaved them to work for nothing but sorrow, were now coming back to those who managed to escape this hell to teach them some kind of 'humanity'.

There was no specific intent to move away from what is considered typical. T (and with it O and J) became so inspired by these old descriptions of the missionaries and more importantly, by the story of the Maroons - and it seemed to fit perfectly with the instrumental parts that we had already written. The term Dede Kondre, for us, encompasses our admiration for the rainforest, its bravely heroic inhabitants and their eternal struggle against the insatiable and rapacious oppressors.

The fact that you take interest in the Surinam culture suggests a somewhat broader or more open political/cultural mindset. This is definitely not always the case in black metal circles. Does it bother you that you are operating within a genre that is known for its conservative attitudes? (if so: what specific tension do you sometimes experience; and how to overcome this tension?) (if not: don't you think it should bother us?)

The stupidity of some people within black metal continues to baffle us, and it is indeed a pity that the genre sometimes appears to be infused with people who have extremely oppressive ideals. Of course, we have experienced sexist tensions and political struggles, and in certain cases the only way to overcome these tensions seems to be violence. Nonetheless, we do not call for a certain purity of correctitude. If you want to be active within (black) metal you will inevitably be in contact with people who do not hold your same views. It is impossible to be 'politically correct' to an extent where you cannot even wear a t-shirt of a band of whom the drummer maybe wore a t-shirt of a band that played with an NSBM band 20 years ago. It is ridiculous to penalize people over this, and yet those with whom we share many similar ideals have done this. It should not be a battle of who is the most purified in his/her ideals.



I understand your point of view, in fact, I think BM simply excludes a concept as 'purity of correctitude'. Nonetheless I sometimes question myself if I am not taken this political aspect too lighthearted. To an artistic degree one can palliate an act as Burzum because of the undisputable importance for the genre; but one-liners as 'separate the music from the content' hardly withstand when the artistic value is grotesquely overshadowed by the political content in ways seen within BM. Where do you personally, as a fan of the BM genre, draw the line in this matter? Furthermore: is it possible that the genre's intertwinement with these topics sensitize a part of their audience, and thus are counterproductive (from an NSBM point of view)?

As you say, if the artistic content is overshadowed by political messaging, it's of no interest to us and dismissible. Most of these projects operate outside of the current "mainstream" of black metal so to speak. There are a lot more "questionable" bands and projects however who are very much accepted in this mainstream, whose musical and artistic

quality is pretty indisputable and whose form and content create a unified aesthetic. It's hard to formulate definitive criteria who to dismiss and who to embrace, and a certain flexibility in such matters is always advisable. However, it poses a difficult problem. On the one hand we reject the post-modern ironic distance in viewing art, where a separation of form and content allows one to enjoy art with a certain haughty attitude. On the other hand, it's possible to enjoy art with a political message one might not agree with on a personal level, but whose aesthetic quality and combination of form and content are qualitatively excellent. The marriage of such qualities within early fascist futuristic art for example is undeniable, the ever controversial use of fascist imagery by artists like Death in June, or the avant-garde historicist art of Anselm Kiefer.

According to the inserts there are lyrics for the songs, but I was wondering if these are actually pronounced by your vocalist (all the time)? If not, should we rather understand them as accompanying the music in a way for example the artwork does?

The lyrics should always be seen as an accompaniment to the music, whether all words are precisely pronounced or not. Especially in black metal, one really cannot distinguish exact pronunciation, and if one wants to delve deeper into the music you should inevitably read the lyrics instead of trying to 'hear' them. When we were recording Dor, I had already written a large part of the lyrics but improvised other bits. For Dede Kondre, everything was already written and is pronounced and, since we recorded everything live, some extra parts are improvised.

What would you like to achieve with Turia? How do you expect the band to further evolve?

In a sense we already achieved more than we set out to do; we intended to create at least one album that satisfied our inner movement for this kind of music and so far we have managed to surpass that standard by one more. Most of all we will strive to attain our highest possible creative plains, however high or low those are, as we hope all musicians and artists in general do. We will try to gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities of our constellation and develop this, if this process stagnates we will cut the cord and free ourselves of any remaining impediments.



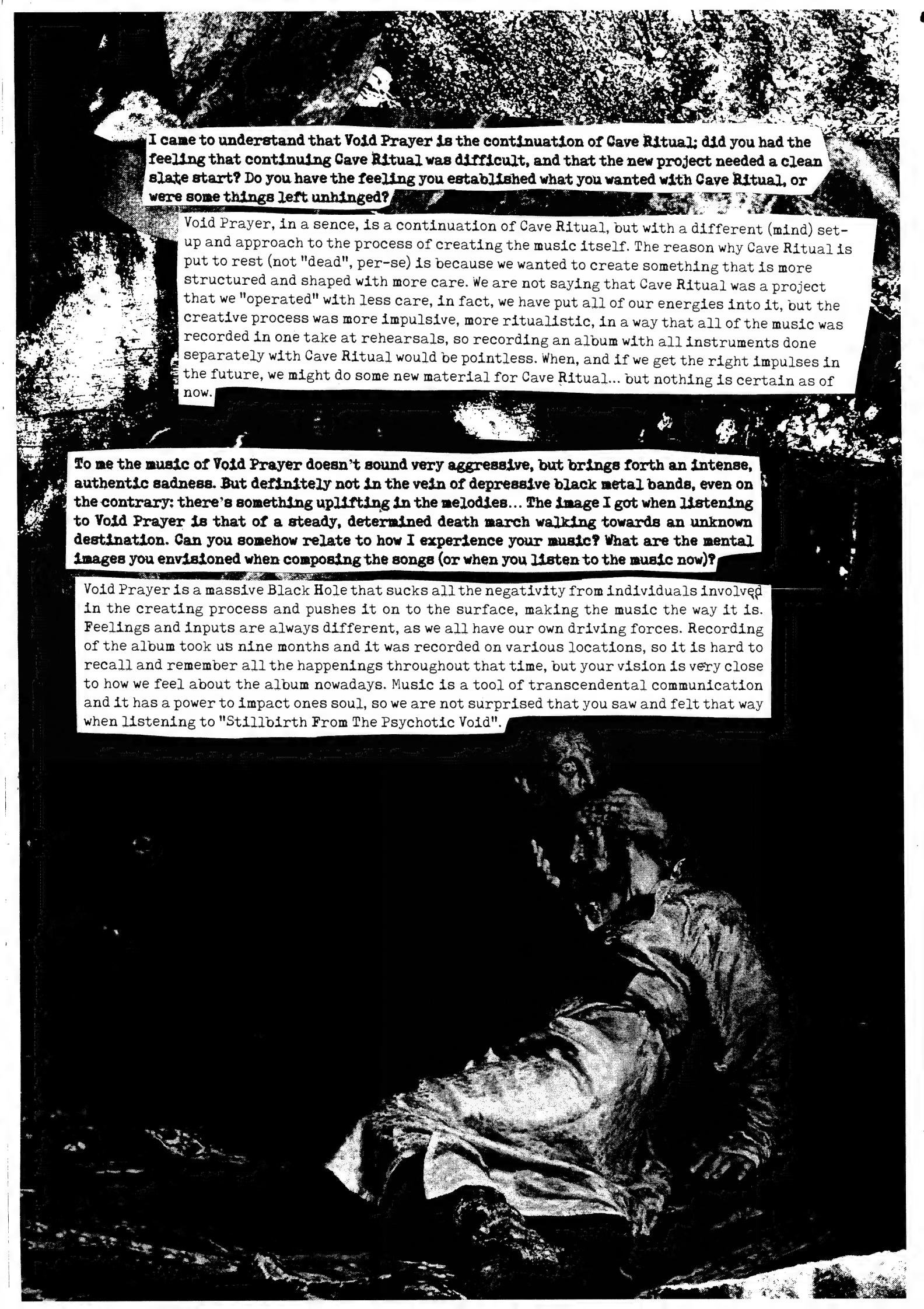


VOID prayer

Around the beginning of the 19th Century the Spanish painter Francisco De Goya retreated to a villa near Madrid. Disillusioned by politics and weakened by illness, the nearly deaf artist created his Pinturas Negras on the walls of his house, the Black Paintings. The somber paintings weren't meant for the public, and depict a distressing, claustrophobic worldview conceived by an embittered person afflicted by psychological fears and pains. Why am I mentioning this? Because whenever I listen to 'Stillbirth from the Psychotic Void' I envision these sceneries. Void Prayer doesn't assign to a trend in the current BM scene, but discloses a very personal understanding of their surroundings. And it's blackened.

Interview with O.





I came to understand that Void Prayer is the continuation of Cave Ritual; did you had the feeling that continuing Cave Ritual was difficult, and that the new project needed a clean slate start? Do you have the feeling you established what you wanted with Cave Ritual, or were some things left unhinged?

Void Prayer, in a sence, is a continuation of Cave Ritual, but with a different (mind) set-up and approach to the process of creating the music itself. The reason why Cave Ritual is put to rest (not "dead", per-se) is because we wanted to create something that is more structured and shaped with more care. We are not saying that Cave Ritual was a project that we "operated" with less care, in fact, we have put all of our energies into it, but the creative process was more impulsive, more ritualistic, in a way that all of the music was recorded in one take at rehearsals, so recording an album with all instruments done separately with Cave Ritual would be pointless. When, and if we get the right impulses in the future, we might do some new material for Cave Ritual... but nothing is certain as of now.

To me the music of Void Prayer doesn't sound very aggressive, but brings forth an intense, authentic sadness. But definitely not in the vein of depressive black metal bands, even on the contrary: there's something uplifting in the melodies... The image I got when listening to Void Prayer is that of a steady, determined death march walking towards an unknown destination. Can you somehow relate to how I experience your music? What are the mental images you envisioned when composing the songs (or when you listen to the music now)?

Void Prayer is a massive Black Hole that sucks all the negativity from individuals involved in the creating process and pushes it on to the surface, making the music the way it is. Feelings and inputs are always different, as we all have our own driving forces. Recording of the album took us nine months and it was recorded on various locations, so it is hard to recall and remember all the happenings throughout that time, but your vision is very close to how we feel about the album nowadays. Music is a tool of transcendental communication and it has a power to impact ones soul, so we are not surprised that you saw and felt that way when listening to "Stillbirth From The Psychotic Void".

I once heard the phrase: 'Culture lives, moves, but when it's true, it's recognizable'. What does black metal in essence means to you? Do you recognize that same aspect in other aspects of cultural life? Can you relate to other cultural manifestations outside black metal, because they are driven by that same initial essence?

The very essence of Black Metal is not just the music you make/perform, it is more of a higher state of whole being... at least for us! It is a never-ending stream that flows to infinity. It manifests itself through various shapes and forms like a ghoul from your worst nightmares.

Black Metal is not, and it shouldn't be a part of any culture or any of its aspects.



Void Prayer's debut album deals with mental states. Does the band has some kind of therapeutic value for you? Do you find that negative music as black metal can result in something positive for the musician or listener?

To some extent, yes, it has a therapeutically value and it resulted in something positive, as we met each other and loads of other people. But on the other hand, people inside the Black Metal "community" are often very opposite of "normal" people, with a different approach and perception of everyday life, to say the least. That is the reason why we all dive into the jaws of this monstrosity called Black Metal... It lets us be free from all the forms of modern society.

Why do you think people lean towards something, in this case black metal, that is in fact also a negative factor for them.

Most of the people, poisoned by the world we live in, go by their inner struggles and lean towards negativity because it makes them create something that doesn't come not from this existence. We all ask ourselves, what is the purpose of life? Well, there is no purpose besides dying, which makes life, we are living, a total negation of itself. Every moment you spent here is just postponed death, so take it as it is and create something of higher value.

Creation comes through destruction, as destruction comes through creation.



We can consider Void Prayer to be from Bosnia-Herzegovina, yet one of the members comes from the Netherlands. First of all, how did he come in contact with the rest of the band? If you compare Void Prayer to other Bosnian bands: do you think that the fact that you have a non-Bosnian bandmember plays a role in the uniqueness of the band's sound.

All of the bands from Black Plague Circle are rooted in Bosnian soil, but as you said, some of the bands have members that are from other countries like the Netherlands, which proves that physical distance makes no barriers when it comes to creating the music. We know each other for years, we all have similar views on life and art in general, so it was natural to start doing music together. It was bound to happen that way!

Nothing shall be beyond our reach...

You mentioned Void Prayer is part of the Black Plague Circle, and so are bands as Obsuritatem, Deathcircle, Niteris... I have a background in hardcore culture, where the crew concept is rather common and anchors in the idea of the more obvious 'strength through unity' or 'strength in numbers'. What's the idea of being connected with these bands in a circle? Is there a shared philosophy that goes beyond that fact of just pulling the same end of the rope?

There is a certain truth in "strength through unity", but Black Plague Circle represents a philosophy. It is more than just being a "group of bands". Every band is an entity for itself, but again all of them are like flames creating untouchable fire that burns everything in sight. A will to grow a spiritual/higher state is what unites us.



Stillbirth From the Psychotic Void was released on the Chinese label Goatowarex. Not the most obvious choice from a geographical point of view, and definitely not if you take into consideration that one of the bandmembers has his own label, The Throat. How did you come in contact with Goatowarex, and why wasn't The Throat an option?

Goatowarex is the type of label that is there to support the bands and the ideas in full force, so we are beyond grateful to be under its banner. We have been in contact with Goatowarex from the beginning of our circle which led to our collaboration, and it will continue in future.

The Throat is a label dedicated to releasing Raw Black Metal on cassette formats, which in fact, released Void Prayer's first self-titled demo in 2014. "Stillbirth from the Psychotic Void" will get the same treatment - it will be released on cassette by The Throat in near future.

By releasing records from Cave Ritual, Obskuritatem and Void Prayer Bosnian black metal gained a bit more attention within international (underground) milieus. Do you think the increased interest is justified? Can you tell us a bit more about the state of BM in Bosnia & Herzegovina: is it merely individuals doing their own thing or is there some coherence?

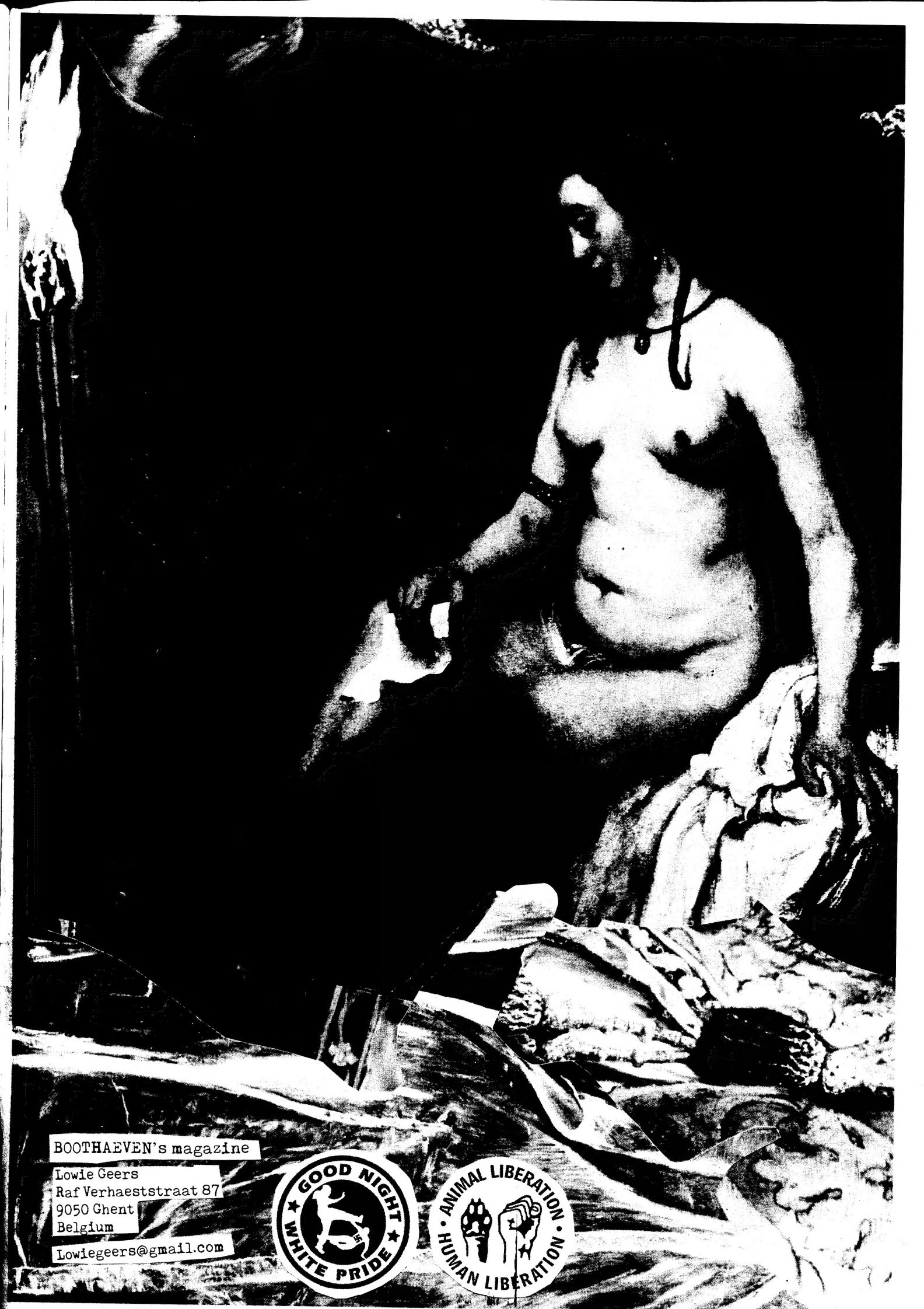
Are there elements of B&H culture and history that influence the approach on black metal?

We are not here to be a part of any "international" or "underground" milieu, as we stand alone... we don't feel a part of any other "scenes" but our own. People want to consume things that are happening at a certain moment in time, because they got "approved" by some internet forums or social medias, rather than by their own likings. That is pretty pathetic!

Speaking of Black Metal from Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are only a few individuals outside Black Plague Circle that are doing something actually good, but besides them, there is nothing worth mentioning.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is war-torn country, with a dark history that lurks hidden beneath a "normal" life, where you can really feel the aftermath of war, even after 20+ years. So take this as a yes to your question... Growing up being bombarded every day, having almost nothing to eat and drink, left a huge impact to the approach on, not only our music, but everyday life.





BOOTHAEVEN's magazine

Lowie Geers
Raf Verhaeststraat 87
9050 Ghent
Belgium

Lowiegeers@gmail.com



